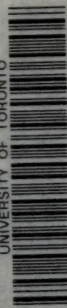



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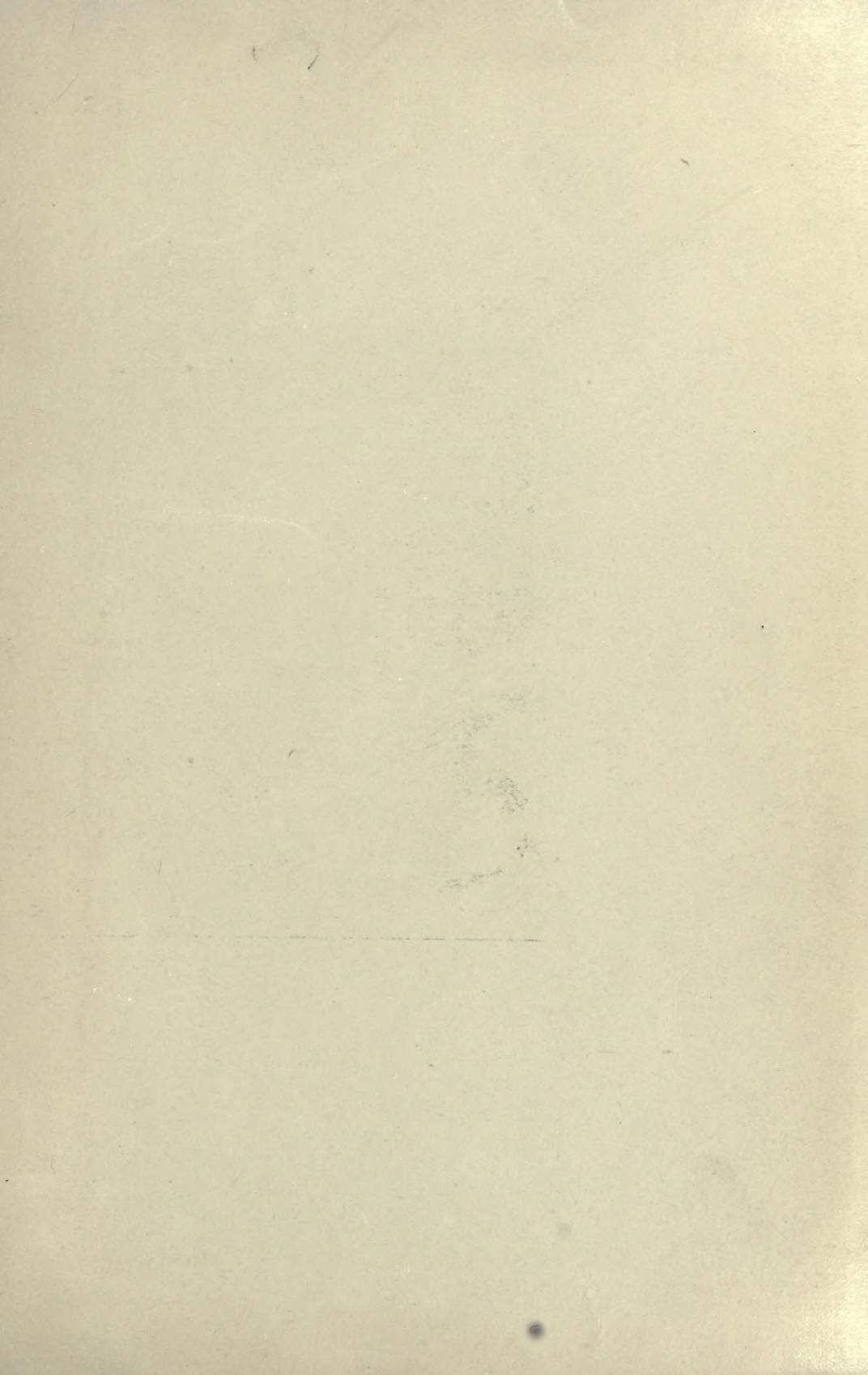
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Semi-Detached House
and
Other Stories

by
J. Try-Davies
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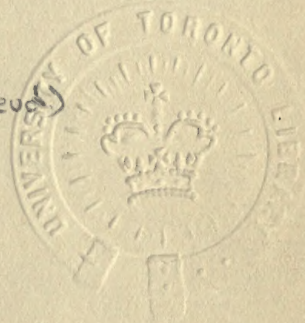




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A
Semi-Detached House
and
Other Stories

by
J. Try-Davies (pseud)
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Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year nineteen hundred, by J. TRY-DAVIES, in the office of the Minister of Agriculture

IN memory of many pleasant evenings,
this book is dedicated to the Pen and
Pencil Club of Montreal, by the author
and illustrator.

“A SEMI-DETACHED HOUSE”

CHAPTER I.

“**I** AM all yours, dear,” said Ruth, as I released her, “but, before I promise to marry you, I want to talk it over.”

I had just blundered out my carefully prepared avowal and prayer. When I began the avowal, I immediately perceived, what indeed I might have guessed, that Ruth knew all about it already, and so I jumped at once to the asking with a rather indefinite “Will you?” which, however, served the purpose well enough. My attitude was made rather awkward by the fact that Ruth, being quite prepared, had taken a defensive position in a high but narrow arm-chair on the opposite side of the little tea-table—so, as I could not very well continue kneeling by her side, she easily checked my caresses, and ordered me to return to distance and decorum. Her eyes, however, shone so kindly that I felt

assured that good conduct would receive its reward.

Before I set forth the conditions of her consent, I will say that those conditions were so extraordinary that even my worshipping soul would have hesitated before accepting them had not my own mind been strongly influenced by philosophical study of society and the married state in our own times.

I will also say something about Ruth and myself, so that the reader may be properly introduced to our two selves, and be able to understand that our eccentric experiment, suggested by Ruth, but adopted by me, was the result of no mournful experiences of life, but rather the outcome of serious reading supplemented by a varied and deep knowledge of society and the human heart.

Ruth was as pretty as the may in bloom. Indeed, I loved to call her May-Blossom. Her nature was wholesome and as warm as her heart, while her dear person was ruled by a wise little head. Her will was, I suspect, very strong, but she always managed to keep it veiled in diplomacy. It peeped out now and then, but was promptly called back, and so held me in the awe of the unknown.

She was very well educated and had the experience of several seasons in London, and had travelled a great deal. I think that her age was between twenty-five and thirty. She was mistress of a fortune large enough to buy every comfort and as many luxuries as prudence might advise, but not so great as to attract remark.

Her accomplishments were many, and she was a good companion indoors or afield. But she had one gift—a musical voice that was charming to hear whether she spoke or sang. It was a mezzo-soprano, and, having been excellently taught, she used it with that professional ease common enough among American girls, but rare among the English.

She must have had some experiences of love, but I do not know what they were, nor did I ever try to find out—for I am satisfied that the last love is always the best.

My own story, until I met Ruth, is very ordinary. I was born and bred a healthy English boy, and, in due time, obtained a commission in one of Her Majesty's most distinguished regiments; but, as that gallant corps is only sent abroad in cases of emer-

gency, I soon wearied of the prospect of long service in peaceful barrack duty.

Of course, I might have volunteered for one of the places where bayonet exercise is practised sincerely though unacademically,—but many other men were eager to go and make a name, while I had that anodyne to ambition, a comfortable fortune. All the same my heart sank as for the last time I commanded my party at the Guard Mounting at St. James's. I had taken my share of the fun of life with my brother officers; but my long leaves had been spent in travel, and, as regimental duties were light, I had plenty of time for reading.

The study of people and of society amused and interested me, and I had considerable opportunities for observation.

It is no business of the reader's to know my love affairs. It should be enough to say that, when I met Ruth, I was quite aware that Love is the most enduring or the most ephemeral thing in the world. It may crystallize into adamantine strength, or may be shivered into a thousand atoms if roughly treated while the crystals are setting.

It is not necessary to tell how Ruth and I first met, or how we fell in love. The milestones of that passionate pilgrimage are well remembered by us, but the reader, if he has ever travelled that road, will know what delightful perspectives were opened up at each stage of the journey until at the end the Temple of Hymen came in sight, fair to see, but with awful closed doors to which we each must lend a key.

As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, my carefully considered and often-rehearsed invitation to Ruth was never delivered—but a kiss did as well or better. She produced her key of the Temple, but declined to hand it over to me until I agreed to certain conditions.

"You know," she said, "that I love you." She blushed again, and cried, "go back, sir," for I had started from my chair.

"I didn't know," said I, "until this moment."

"Do you suppose if I didn't that I would have let you —"

"But you let me so little," I interrupted.

"Be quiet, and listen to what I want to tell

you. It may sound strangely to you, but I love you and myself too much to keep back what is the truth."

I believe that I turned pale at these words. I know that the room swam before my eyes. For some moments I could scarcely see Ruth, and, out of the confusion, suddenly came the strident ticking of a clock. Had she committed some fault or been deceived fatally by some one, and was she fool enough to trust to my generosity for oblivion? Alas! a man never forgets when he knows. The unknown or suspected rival may be endured, but the confessed fault never.

Of course Ruth had not the least idea of the thoughts which were distressing me, but she saw my ill ease, and, leaning forward in her chair, clasped her hands as she cried, "What is the matter, Jack. Are you ill?"

Her unaffected concern enabled me to summon the courage back to my heart, and then the colour returned to my face as I replied, smiling bravely, "It is a little trying, you know."

Ruth eyed me for some moments in anxious scrutiny, and then, reassured, she settled herself comfortably, and continued :

"They say that marriage is the hangman of love, and I really believe that it very often is. But, the fault is not with marriage, but with the conditions in which married people live. They are too much in each other's pockets, and all idea of courtship is ended. You know that I have lived a very independent life, and while I may be persuaded to take you for my husband, and in some things my master, I want to keep separate a little kingdom of my own. When you come to know my plan you will see that it secures for you an equal share of liberty. My wish is to buy a couple of semi-detached houses and make a communicating door or doors. One house will be mine and the other yours, and we can each close or open our door as we please—so that if you want to be alone you close your door, and I, of course, will have the same privilege.

"We shall have to trust each other a good deal, I suppose, but that will be better than boring, and a little healthy jealousy keeps love awake."

She looked at me enquiringly as she finished. I waited a little, pretending to be

thinking deeply ; then I got up and went over to her and said :

"You are very beautiful and very wise, Dear, stand up, please."

As my first command fell upon her unaccustomed ear, she hesitated—then, gently yielding, she rose from her chair and came a little way to meet me.

CHAPTER II.

AND so we were married, and were happy ever after. I use the time-honoured words here, because instead of being the end of our romance, marriage was but the beginning, and was really far more delightful and interesting than the days of our courtship.

Rather to my surprise Ruth had a very fashionable wedding. We plighted troth at St. George's, Hanover Square, before a popular bishop, a large assembly of our friends and my old comrades in arms of all ranks. Our portraits appeared in the *Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic*, and the first stage of our wedding journey was a country house lent me by a cousin.

I had, of course, submitted cheerfully to Ruth's wishes for a big wedding, but I could not help asking how it was that she who held advanced ideas about the married state could condescend to such frivolity.

"Dear," she said, "our semi-detached house will cause a lot of talk, and people will

say all sorts of unkind things. If we are married by the registrar and steal away quietly they will have a handle—but if we have a big wedding like other people, it will stop half the talk."

I saw that she was right, so I went at once to order seven bracelets for the bridesmaids and a pair of boots with heel-balled soles for myself.

The honeymoon is never described in English novels, and is supposed to be a season of silly endearment of no interest to any but the couple themselves. Nor will I break the custom in my own story. The first stage of a common life, led by a man and woman who are gentle, is a subject too high and awful to be set forth in words. Not only is the great mystery of all the ages present, but heart tells its secret to heart, and Selfishness, who may not enter the Temple of True Love, waits at the outer gate.

We travelled about in great contentment, and revisited the art shrines of the continent whose familiar glories were, to our eyes, doubled by the charm of sharing their beauties, and we helped each other to a fuller knowledge of their secrets.

For six months we wandered happily with no greater trials than the ordinary discomforts of travel, and not a word had been said about "the semi-detached house" by either of us. I was far too happy to wish for a change, and Ruth was either in like mind, or, as I suspected, knowing how happy I was, laid aside her plan for a time.

We were having coffee on the terrace of the Zähringer Hof, at Freiburg, one lovely evening, when the portier handed me a telegram which told me that my Aunt Charlotte was dead, having made me her heir, and that my presence in England was necessary. I passed the paper over to Ruth, saying, "Dear old Aunty! But it's a bore all the same. She was not rich, you know, but she had some good pictures and things."

Ruth was folding and refolding the paper mechanically until it took the form of a cocked-hat, then looking up with a little blush for her irreverence, she said, "Very well, we must go." I think that she sighed a little.

Then the *maitre-d'hôtel* came to tell us that the carriage was waiting to take us to hear

the great organ in the Cathedral. It was almost dark in the big church, so Ruth slipped her hand into mine as we sat and listened to the march of the wonderful procession of notes that wound up with "The Avalanche in the Alps," which, as every one knows, ends with "Home, Sweet Home."

As we walked back to the hotel, preceded by a servant with a lantern, Ruth leaned close upon my arm, and I know that we were both thinking of our own home yet to be made. I prayed secretly that it might not be "semi-detached" after all.

CHAPTER III.

DURING our homeward journey Ruth was more than ordinarily nice to me. I think that she guessed that I regretted my promise about the semi-detached house, and wished not only to make amends, but also to shew me that if she stuck to her bargain it was not because of any lack of fondness for me or my company. I guessed the intention of her kindness, but it only served to make the prospect of a partial separation more distasteful.

We arrived in town in the dull season and went to Brown's hotel. The day was a busy one, for Ruth had to get half-mourning and I to see Aunt Charlotte's solicitors. A junior member of the firm was awaiting me when I arrived at their office. A few polite words were passed, but, as it was evidently not a case of severe grief on my part, Mr. Rolley, without further delay, read me the will. The personal estate was sufficient to add about £1,500 a year to my income, and there was

besides some real estate consisting of *two semi-detached houses* with fair-sized gardens in the pleasant suburb of Barnes. One of the houses had been my aunt's home for many years, but she had only lately bought it, together with its neighbour.

The hand of Fate was between my shoulders pushing steadily in the direction of Ruth's wish, and, as I reflected that escape was impossible, I was fully consoled by the prospect of the happiness in my wife's face as she learned my heritage.

So I jumped into a cab and drove back to our hotel. I had been absent from town but six months, yet I felt forgotten and rather nervous over it. I even leaned forward in the cab as I looked about for some familiar figure, but I caught nothing but some looks of surprised recognition here and there.

I felt humiliated, and yet there was consolation in the fact that, if the fashionable world had forgotten me, I was free to begin my married life in London under such conditions as pleased Ruth and myself. That our novel social experiment would be a subject for criticism and even distasteful ridicule I

knew very well, and I was well content to avail myself of oblivion which could not last very long, but which would give us time to settle down in our experimental home before the society reporter or a worse than he—the New Woman—should find us out.

I thought that Ruth had never looked prettier when I found her dressed in half-mourning waiting my return in our sitting-room at Brown's. Like all very nice women she was a comedian, and, with her quiet frock of black, discreetly relieved here and there by touches of violet and white, she had composed her face to an expression of gentle sorrow which would have made me smile had I not believed that it gave her pleasure and pride to share the first mourning that had come into my life since our marriage.

As she rose to meet me on my entrance, she looked to me with an appeal for approval in her dear eyes. I paused for a moment pretending to look her over, but in reality I was wondering how often she might wear black, and for whom. I might be fated to be one of the number. The idea of leaving her, distant as the event in likelihood was, gave me a stab of pain.

Then I turned her round and round, and examined the new costume in silence for a while. "Dear!" said I, and—but Ruth had no more words than I, for she simply said "Dear!"

We did not waste much time in talk when we wanted to say things to each other, but, like the silent language of the deaf, the lips had a great deal to do with the conversation.

"There — that will do," said Ruth, straightening herself, "now be quiet, and tell me about the will—I hope there is lace—I don't care for jewels."

"Dear," I replied, "there is about fifteen hundred a year, and, I dare say, lace, but I did not read the inventory. I know that there is china and some pictures, and a fat brougham horse, and—no, I think that the parrot is dead—there was a dog—and there must be a cat, you know, but, oh, Ruth, there is—there is—*a semi-detached house!*"

CHAPTER IV.

IT was on a bright, warm October morning that we set out to inspect our new home. My rather vague answers to her questions had left Ruth's curiosity unsatisfied, but I think it was with a sense of happy anticipation not quite free from awe that she sprang into the cab. As we went along she pretended to guess which might be our house, and we laughed and were very happy over our childish fun. At length, as we were passing along the riverside terrace at Barnes, I signalled to the driver to stop. We alighted in front of a handsome old red-brick house of considerable size. It had evidently been the mansion of some person of wealth and importance, but in later years its largeness and situation had made it difficult to find a tenant, and it had been divided into two houses of unequal size, that in which my aunt had lived being the larger. The alterations which had evidently been made many years ago had been skillfully done, and time had removed the scars left by

the operation. Stately cedars stood in the gardens which were still bright with flowers, and the twinkle of glass in the distance promised the luxuries of hot-houses. The grounds had probably at one time been large, but one or two modern-looking villas, standing at a respectful distance in rear of the house, had evidently been built upon the original domain. The old stables had disappeared, and had been replaced by offices of a much later date.

I rang the bell, and, as the gate clicked open, we stepped through. I was a little at one side watching Ruth, who stood silent with a little frown on her face, and lips slightly pursed. I had observed the same expression the day before when she was meditating upon a hat, and I dared not interrupt her thoughts.

"Jack," she exclaimed, "it is the very thing. Come along," and, taking my hand, she almost ran up the carriage drive to the door, where stood awaiting us, a cheery looking silver-haired man-servant in mourning livery. Ruth dropped my hand with a blush and smiled pleasantly on the old man, who, with a low bow, ushered us into the house.

Before she could take a step forward, I caught up my bride in my arms and lifted her over the threshold. She gasped in astonishment as I set her down on the hall rug.

"I don't care to take chances," said I gravely.

Then we visited the rooms. They were very well furnished, though not in the modern taste, and but few alterations and additions were needed to suit the house to our fancies.

Ruth was too considerate to ask to see the next-door lodging, which was unoccupied, my aunt not having found a tenant to her mind; but, of course, I guessed her desire, and, getting the keys from the butler, we visited the smaller dwelling. I did not carry Ruth in, but she turned to me—we being alone in the empty hall—and, putting up her face, kissed me a welcome. I immediately understood that all was settled—that the larger house was to be mine and the smaller one hers. My house would be the official home and Ruth's the "little apartments," as the French called them.

There were back stairs in both houses, which were arranged to separate the servants'

quarters from those of the masters, and we found that a door of communication could easily be made on the landing on the first floor.

My aunt's house was, indeed, ready for occupation, but we agreed to wait until Ruth's nest was finished before moving in. We returned to town chatting busily of the details of the establishment, and very soon a clever architect was making drawings and taking measurements. I found it a most delightful occupation to go about with Ruth choosing hangings and furniture. We had money enough to get anything that we wanted, and the result was a very beautiful little dwelling.

One of the rooms indeed was so delicate in colour and so feminine in its fittings that I felt rather afraid of it. It seemed likely to carry Ruth back to that shrine of girlish dreams in which I had had no place.

It took some time to decide upon servants, but we finally arranged to keep on Aunt Charlotte's establishment, and Ruth, besides her own maid, engaged a cook, who was also housekeeper, and a tablemaid and housemaid.

The stables were easily managed, as we each brought our own horses and carriages.

All these preparations took time, which afforded opportunity for wedding calls and two or three visits to friends in the country.

We were looked upon as happy young people, like most newly-wed couples, and not otherwise remarkable, for we did not choose to tell the world of our proposed adventure, preferring to endure the inevitable criticism and ridicule when we should be fairly settled in our own home.

At last one day in the early spring, when primroses were being hawked in the streets, we bade good-bye to Brown's Hotel, and drove away to our new home. The afternoon was bright and the river bustling with craft of all sorts, but the chill of coming separation was upon us, and, although it was of our own choosing, the parting was a grave matter. I felt that I had never loved Ruth so well as at that moment, and I caught a gleam of comfort from the idea that she must be right after all, and that the approaching trial would keep our love ever new.

I had often heard that, for a like reason,

there are no happier marriages than in the navy.

The Semi-detached House looked very handsome, and the windows glittered cheerfully as I turned my horses in through the gate and up the drive to the door, where old Bullen, the butler, was standing ready to receive us. I lifted Ruth down from the high phaeton, and we marched up the steps trying to look as if it were an ordinary home-coming.

"There will be tea in my boudoir in half an hour, dear," said Ruth to me over her shoulder as we parted in the hall.

I never enjoyed five o'clock tea more in my life, and I had a sense of new and keener interest in my wife, for I felt that, great as I knew her love to be, she was not at my mercy.

If our lives were to be really united, it would not be by submission of one of us, but by patient courtship and mutual trust perfected by experience and urged on by tender passion.

There was also an odd feeling that I was making love to some one who was not my wife, and I confess that it was not without charm.

"It has been very nice, dear—has it not?" said Ruth at last. "Now, I must go and dress."

I presently followed her from the room and passed through the "Dreadful Door," as I called it, and so on to my own dressing-room.

It had been agreed that my dinner-table should always be laid as if Ruth were expected, and in her own home a dinner was also provided for her. This arrangement was of course subject to our individual plans for the evening. If the "Dreadful Door" were closed on Ruth's side, I was not to expect her, and if my side of it were shut she would dine in her own house.

I was waiting in my drawing-room trying to read an evening paper when I heard the rustle of skirts, and Ruth came into the room, and, stooping over the back of my chair, kissed me on the forehead; then she darted away and pretended to be driving home a hairpin, as old Bullen announced dinner. The little festival went very well indeed. The cook was evidently good and the servants well-trained and outwardly unconscious of any oddity in our domestic

arrangements. I had ordered up a bottle of very fine Madeira, which had long been stored by Aunt Charlotte—champagne seemed too vulgar and port too robust, while claret lacked the warmth of a wine fit for the toast of our home-coming.

I did not make a speech, but, having dismissed the servants, I said only "God bless you, dear," and emptied my glass with a little choke.

"Dear, I will try to make you happy," she replied, as she pledged me.

I blessed her for the answer to the unasked question of my heart.

We both did our best to make the first evening in our new home pleasant, and we succeeded very well. When Ruth, affecting to suppress a yawn, declared that the excitement of the day and the Madeira at dinner had made her sleepy, I read in her eyes that the time was come for her to assert her rights. That she would do so I had felt certain, but I suppose that my face fell as she bade me good-night, for she hastened to comfort me by being even more tender than usual. This was of course a mistake, and quickly be-

coming aware of it she set her face and left me.

I was not to be outdone in self-control, and, having armed myself with a novel of adventure, I lit a pipe and determined to read until I grew sleepy. For half an hour, watching the clock, I fought against my curiosity and impatience.

Then, going up-stairs I found, as I expected, that one half of the "Dreadful Door" was closed. I went down again, and, my doubts being at an end, I managed to lose myself in my book.

It was about two o'clock when I went up to my room. I paused a moment at the "Dreadful Door," and, bending my ear, listened—but could hear nothing.

I got to bed, and was smoking a pipe going to sleep, a delightful practice which I had of course put away on my marriage, when it suddenly occurred to me that my young wife was alone in her chamber for the first time for a year, and in a house still strange to her, and where she was some distance from the servants' quarters. I own a fine imagination, and presently had crape-

masked burglars boring through the hall door or climbing ladders to the windows. I should no doubt have invented other terrors had I waited, but I sprang out of bed and ran to the "Dreadful Door" to listen again, determined to kick it open if necessary. As I leant against it, it gave a pretty loud creak, which was immediately followed by a small shriek on the other side.

"Is that you, Ruth?" I cried.

"Ye—es."

"Open the door, please, at once."

"It isn't l—locked," she replied.

In another moment I had her in my arms, and was trying to calm her fright. She had not been able to get to sleep and had heard noises.

"They were furniture or woodwork creaking, you know, but it might have been something else, and I am sure there is a mouse somewhere."

Ruth had turned up all the electric light and, when leaving her at the door for a moment I reappeared with an enormous revolver, she smiled faintly, but persisted in following me down stairs, where I found all safe.



I remember how pretty her little feet looked in the swans-down trimmed slippers.

And Satan tempted me and I fell, for, as I was about to leave Ruth more composed in spirits, I suddenly rushed to a corner of her chamber and kicked at a mouse. The little creature was quicker than I and disappeared—probably behind the wainscot.

"It is gone," said I, with averted face.

"Where, oh where?" cried Ruth.

"I wish I knew," said I.

"It may come back," cried she.

"It probably will," said I—and presently I carried Ruth and the revolver back with me to my own room.

CHAPTER V.

ON the following morning as I breakfasted alone I smilingly thought over the adventures of the night. I had, it was true, come off conqueror in the gay little skirmish, but I knew very well that there had been treachery on the other side as well as strategy on my own, and I was quite prepared to be punished

Indeed, on coming downstairs, I saw that Ruth, who had withdrawn to her own apartment while I was yet asleep, had closed "The Dreadful Door" behind her. I was, therefore, for the first time for months, a single man, and I determined to take the air abroad and see how I felt in the old condition. As the day was fine I ordered the phaeton, and, having finished dressing, I, with some sinking of heart, gently but firmly shut to my half of "The Dreadful Door," and locked it. It did not seem a pretty thing to do, and, as I drove out through the gate, I fancy that I cowered under the eyes that might be watching me from behind the "purdah." Once upon the

high road my back straightened, and, flirting my whip, I drove briskly to town.

As I sauntered down Piccadilly I dropped in at the florist's and bought a bunch of Parma violets just arrived from the south, and despatched them to Ruth, enclosing a card with my initials. In Bond street I was on the point of entering a French bonbon shop when I reflected that I must not overdo my love tokens. The violets would tell her that I thought of her even when barred out, but bonbons would have the look of a bribe.

I had nothing in particular to do, and began to feel that I was an outcast and in disgrace. This would never do if our "semi-detached house" was to be a successful experiment. I confessed to a secret hope that Ruth might also be suffering a like depression of spirits. But, as it would have been unwise to indulge in idle regrets, I braced up, and, remembering that I had not played court tennis for many months, I hailed a cab and drove to Duke's, where I was welcomed by the marker.

I played a couple of sets with him to get my hand in, and then, having earned an appetite, I drove to my service club for luncheon.

There I met some old friends, and I passed a pleasant if frivolous afternoon in their company. I was rather painfully conscious at times of a tenderness to me on their part. The stories were less Rabelaisian, and the scandals were not about married people. But their very delicacy suggested to me that our relations to each other had been changed. I was no longer really a comrade but only a friend, and, alas, my position with Ruth for the moment was very similar.

The little excitement of the afternoon was dying out as I drove home at dusk, and I had a fear that Ruth might elect to dine alone. But when I came down to the drawing-room I found her standing by the fire waiting for me. One little foot was resting upon the fender and one elbow leant against the chimney-piece, while her slightly bowed head told of meditation. She turned swiftly as I entered the room, and beamed a welcome as she thanked me for the violets which she had fastened to her gown.

I began rather hastily to give an account of my day's doings when she checked me with a wave of her hand. "Oh, please don't," she

cried, "it would spoil everything. If we are to be happy we must be really free and trust one another."

She took a little bunch of the violets from her frock and began to work them gently into my buttonhole; giving them a little pat with her hollowed hand she held me by the lapels of my coat as she continued, "it will be very hard at times, for I suppose we shall be jealous. To tell the truth, Dear, I was awfully jealous to-day." Here she brought the lapels together, and, looking up, said, "were you?"

"Oh, dear no!" I answered lightly, and instantly repented, for a momentary flash of Ruth's eyes warned me. "I supposed you were shut up here alone, you know," I added hastily.

"You supposed that," said Ruth smiling, "well, Mr. Grand Turk, you may take me in to dinner."

We had a cosy evening together, but when Ruth, after bidding me good-night, left the room, she reappeared for a moment and said,

"I went to town, too."

CHAPTER VI.

RUTH'S parting words gave a serious and not over comfortable turn to my thoughts as I smoked my lullaby pipe. I for the first time realized fully the difficulties and even the dangers of what was after all a false position in that society of which we continued to form a part. That our experiment had the charm of novelty was true, and the very uncertainty of our companionship made those hours which we spent together more like the meeting of lovers by their warmth of affection which was too passionate to be peaceful. On the other hand, the irregular and perhaps capricious absences made any plans for a joint life so uncertain as to be worthless. Not only would our duties be performed unaided by each other, but our pleasures would very often draw us in different directions. I had little anxiety on Ruth's account, but a good deal on my own. Ruth of course could not understand this, for it is given to few girls to know that man and woman differ in the character of their instincts as greatly

as they do in their physical appearance. Indeed many married people never learn this fact, which is a very important feature in life partnership ; and they set down to personal failing or peculiarity what is but a characteristic of the sex. It is easy enough to set forth these philosophical considerations for the advantage of the young people who may read this story ; but it was by no means so easy to explain them to Ruth. In fact it was quite impossible. As my thoughts were brought to a stop by this conclusion, I suddenly perceived that nothing was left for me but a course of action which, while simple enough, would I knew tax my wisdom and self-control very heavily. I must protect Ruth as well as I could, keep a strict watch upon myself and hope for a deliverance from "The Semi-detached House."

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN it became known that we were fairly settled in our home, friends and acquaintances began to call upon Ruth. Of course everybody had heard of The Semi-detached House, and a pardonable curiosity caused the pages of Ruth's visiting list to be filled up with ominous rapidity. We neither of us wished to be famous. Indeed I had been at some pains to persuade a friend, who edited a fashionable newspaper, to suppress his lady interviewer.

Ruth of course received visitors in my half of the house, and in spite of many hints and even supplications steadily declined to shew her own sanctuary to any but her intimate friends.

We soon began to give small dinner parties. At one of these, when we returned to the drawing-room, my old friend, Mrs. Vanne, who was seated on a sofa in a corner, caught my eye and gently moved her skirt to make room. I accepted the invitation and made my way to her side. Bessie Vanne and I had known each other very well before my marriage, and, if she now took

on a little air of protection, the reader need not suppose that there had been anything more between us than one of those delightful flirtations where both are but playing at making love. As I settled myself by her side she looked very pretty, and there was a sparkle of fun in her eyes that was temptation itself. I believe that even the very good people thoroughly enjoy being a little naughty,—trifling with damnation, but keeping just out of its reach, being a fascinating sport.

"Well, Mr. Semi-Attached," said Mrs. Vanne, "what is the other half of you doing?"

"Doing those things which it ought not to do," I replied, gazing sentimentally into my companion's eyes. I had no wish to parade my deep affection for my wife, and I confess to having felt curiosity as to Bessie Vanne's opinion of our bold experiment.

"Do you mean," said she, stiffening a little, "that the bridegroom, or what is left of him, is forgetting his bride and laying broken victuals on the altars of the old worship?"

I looked so distressed by this forcible statement of the case that Bessie immediately softened and said, with a little laugh: "Never mind, I

dare say you are lonely now and then, and it was not nice of me to tease. But tell me really—how does the absurd thing work ? ”

“ Admirably,” I promptly replied. “ Like most great inventions, I wonder that it has not been tried before ; and people have accepted the situation without making any fuss.”

“ Bless his little innocence ! ” ejaculated Bessie. “ Why you are the most talked-about people in London to-day. Of course everybody has called because you are respectable—as yet ; but if you could hear the talk ! Some of it is so funny.” Here I winced. “ They say that your demonstrations of affection are regulated by a couple of thermometers — and everybody calls you ‘ The Semi-attacheds,’ but you are immensely popular and to dine here is delightful. The wedding ring is on the finger, but there is an air of mystery and the—a—unconventional—which is fascinating.”

“ I am glad you are enjoying yourself,” said I.

“ So good of you, I’m sure,” she continued. “ But tell me, my friend, how is this foolishness to end ? I think that you have some bad days before you. If you have, come and see me.” Here she dropped her hand lightly upon mine

for a moment, and then rising said—"Let us go into the music room; Mr. Ap-Rhys is going to sing."

Mr. Ap-Rhys was the fashionable singer of the day. He had served for a short time in my old regiment, but, being gifted with the treasure of a real tenor voice and a talent for acting, he had, to the dismay of his family, left the service, and, after a couple of years' hard work, made his appearance upon the stage in that delightful comic opera "The Sirens." His success was immediate, for his beautiful voice and clever acting were set off by good looks and the manners of a gentleman.

You call me to you through the gloaming,
The sea-mist through the darkness roaming;
Thy beckoning arms gleam through the foaming
And draw me to thy sea-borne bed.

O hear!
I come,
I come.

My comrades all in slumber dwelling,
I only hear thy sweet compelling,
My heart with awful joy is welling,
My lost soul flutters through my lips.

O hear!
I come,
I come.

As Mrs. Vanne and I entered the music room Mr. Ap-Rhys was bending over Ruth, who, seated at the piano, was preparing to play the accompaniment to his song. They made such a pretty picture that my heart gave a jump. His attitude suggested admiration or something more, and as Ruth lifted her eyes to his when speaking to him she had a more sentimental appearance than I liked.

The applause which followed the song was mingled with requests for more, but Mr. Ap-Rhys was deaf to entreaty until Ruth joined hers to the other voices. Then he said something to her in so low a tone that I did not catch the words. She seemed to hesitate for a moment, and then smiling good-naturedly said: "Very well. If you wish it." Presently some one took her place at the piano, and, as Ruth and Mr. Ap-Rhys stood up together, the prelude to the last part of Massenet's "Poème d'Amour" was played.

I have already told the reader that my wife had a beautiful mezzo-soprano voice, and I now discovered that she had no little dramatic skill, for she sang her part of the exquisite "Nuit

d'Hyménée " with a passion that surprised me, and, to tell the truth, made me feel uncomfortable.

I glanced at Mrs. Vanne as the enthusiastic applause of the company followed the end of the duet, but her face expressed nothing but polite gratification. Later, as she wished us good night, she shook hands with me in a half careless manner and murmured, " Such delightful music ! "

That night I was very unhappy, as Ruth retiring to her own rooms left me alone in the library.

" O ye wise people who know not jealousy, have you ever known love ? " I smoked furiously as I paced up and down the room, wondering if the Dreadful Door was open and what I should do if it was closed. When I went upstairs the door stood open and my ridiculous jealousy fell at once.

CHAPTER VIII.

RUTH, stimulated, no doubt, by the success of her duet with Mr. Ap-Rhys in the presence of our small but eclectic company, began to practise her voice and to study music with great assiduity. Foreign looking persons with shiny music rolls under their arms often rang at her private door. I made occasional perfunctory appearances at the lessons which followed ; but I speedily realized that I was rather in the way, and, indeed, not finding entertainment retired to my own quarters.

Time now began to lie rather heavily on my hands of a morning. Of course Ruth and I often went to town together, and, as the London season was at its height, our afternoons and evenings were well filled by numerous pleasant engagements. What I liked best, however, was the drive home through the quiet streets in our little brougham when Ruth lay with her dear head upon my shoulder and her hand in mine. Sometimes we talked over the events of the evening or rolled along silently—which was better still.

Of course I was very proud of my young wife, and heartily sympathised with her innocent joy at her success in society. There are no reigning toasts now-a-days, but a couple of centuries earlier she would no doubt have been honoured in that pretty fashion. I had quite got over my spasm of jealousy, and, indeed, Ruth gave me no uneasiness on that score.

I think that it was Ap-Rhys's singing that song from "The Sirens" that suggested to me the occupation I found for my leisure mornings. I had, some years before, written a little play for the garrison theatre at Aldershot, and a perhaps over-indulgent audience had applauded it as a great success. I now determined to amuse myself by writing the libretto of a comic opera, the plot of which had for some time been in my mind. The title was to be "With Trumpet and Drum." Ruth was delighted to see me occupied and interested in my work, and her knowledge of musical composition served me well; for, although she could not write the score, she was able to point out the requirements of the composer when he should be found. She did, however, compose the air of the drummer-boy's song "Daddy Mammy,"

which afterwards became so popular that I was often given the supreme joy of hearing it whistled in the streets.

Now as all writers, both great and small, know, an author is always impelled to dandle his latest work before his friends, — just as a young mother has the baby brought down to the drawing-room for exhibition. She knows very well that her's is not more beautiful than countless other babies, but she has borne it, and she is proud of the feat.

I had laid solemn injunctions upon Ruth not to speak of my work, but very naturally I had mentioned it to Ap-Rhys, as I needed advice as to dramatic possibilities. So one Sunday evening, as he and a few friends were dining with us, he asked permission to reveal the little secret, and begged me to read "With Trumpet and Drum" to the company after dinner. A well-fed audience is predisposed in favour of the giver of the feast, and my libretto was heartily applauded.

Ap-Rhys had seated himself at the piano, and from time to time, begging me to wait a moment, he played a few tentative notes. He was the last of our guests to leave, and,

as he lingered over his whiskey-and-soda, he said, "Look here, Lee, old man, that thing of yours is damned good. I should like to shew it to Brindsley, and see if he will do the score. If he consents, I think Mosher would bring it out at the 'Beaumont,' and I shall be very pleased to play it."

I think that I coloured with pleasure as I replied, "Well, Ap-Rhys, it would be great fun for me, and, if you don't mind the trouble, I shall be very glad to have it submitted to Brindsley."

"Very well, then," said Ap-Rhys, "I will take the copy with me to-night, and shew it to him to-morrow." He paused, and sipped his whiskey-and-soda with an air of deep thought, and then continued, "About the cast, you know. Do you mind my suggesting people?"

"Of course not," I answered. "Besides you are a much better judge than I."

"I was thinking of Mary Haley for the girl drummer-boy," said he. "She could sing and play it well. She is not too tall, and her figure is slight. She has never appeared in tight's yet, but perhaps I can per-

suade her, and, if she does, it will be an additional attraction. She is a good girl, too, and I should like to help her. She is a lady, you know."

Yes, I did know, and I knew also that Ap-Rhys and she were seen together a good deal. Manners and morals of the theatrical world are alike easy, but it does not always follow that comradeship becomes too close. "She would be charming," said I, "and no doubt we could get Mosher to give her the part."

"I have overheard your plotting," cried Ruth from the door of the library. "Oh, Jack, what fun it will be if it is accepted, and it is good, isn't it, Mr. Ap-Rhys? It is very nice of you to help."

"Oh, I'm not disinterested, you know. I hope to make a hit in it."

As Ap-Rhys took leave, Ruth smiling kindly but frankly gave him her hand; but I fancied that I saw a shade of trouble on his handsome face.

When we were alone in the library Ruth pushed a footstool to the side of my chair, and clasping her hands across my knee laid her

cheek upon them. She gazed into the fire as I toyed with the little ringlets on her neck.

"I am afraid, Dear," she said after a long and happy silence, "if the play is accepted it will take you away a great deal, and you will be with those theatrical people ever so much of the time. And I don't think I like Mr. Ap-Rhys very much."

"Well, who do you like?"

"I don't know."

"Who do you like?" I repeated, pinching her ear. "Answer."

"You."

"That's a good girl; but, don't you see that if we are to be truly free and happy together, we must give each other up a good deal."

"Yes, but not when it's hateful."

"I move a suspension of the rules. Who seconds the motion?"

"I do," said Ruth blushing.

"The motion is carried."

And so was the seconder.

CHAPTER IX.

IT was almost a fortnight before I heard anything from Ap-Rhys. The waiting was tedious, for, while I was not depending upon "With Trumpet and Drum" for a livelihood, its success would bring me a certain amount of fame, and it is very pleasant to be a dramatic author of mark in London.

A short note from Ap-Rhys broke the suspense—Brindsley would write the score and Mosher would bring the play out. A conference was to be held at Ap-Rhys's chambers at luncheon on the following day, if convenient to me.

I promptly sent an acceptance by telegram, and next morning I drove to town in high spirits, but with a certain feeling of awe, such as I remembered to have known on my first public innings in my school eleven. Ruth, as excited as myself, sat by my side and looked up to me with a tenderness worthy of a more perilous adventure.

As I alighted at the Albany, where Ap-

Rhys had his chambers, she turned to me with a look in her eyes and a quiver of the mouth that told of a desire to kiss me had she dared ; but, as decorum reigns in Piccadilly at noon, she was obliged to content herself with a comforting squeeze of the hand. She turned and looked back to me as she was driven away.

During luncheon we talked about the operette, and afterwards, over our tobacco, Mr. Mosher came to business. His terms, being considered favourable by Mr. Brindsley and Ap-Rhys, I accepted them without demur, and the details of collaboration were arranged.

For the following two months I spent a great deal of my time with Mr. Brindsley, for of course many alterations in the libretto were necessary in order to suit the requirements of the score, but, when all was finished, he rubbed his hands and said, "I think it will do."

Presently the operette was put in rehearsal with Mr. Ap-Rhys and Miss Mary Haley in the principal roles. I found it very amusing, and, as I was obliged to be at the theatre a

great deal, I flattered myself that I was a hard-worked man. The cast were very pleasant people, and I was frankly admitted into the Bohemia of art which was not very gipsy-like after all.

Mary Haley was all that Ap-Rhys had declared her to be, and something more, for she had a good deal of wit and gay spirits, and, I think, an affectionate nature. We soon became great friends.

As the excitement of the acceptance of the play died out, Ruth began to take the adventure rather seriously. Of course I gave her daily descriptions of the rehearsals and answered a good many questions, of which I did not see the drift at the time.

At last came the night of the dress rehearsal. Mary Haley, uniformed like Hogarth's drummer-boy in "The March of the Guards to Finchley," was charming, and Ap-Rhys of course made a very handsome sergeant. The piece went very well, and Mr. Mosher seemed to be satisfied.

It was late when I got home that night, but I found Ruth sitting up for me.

"Have you had supper?" she asked.

"No," I replied, "I was in haste to get home."

"How nice," she cried, "and now you shall be rewarded." She led me by the hand to the dining-room where supper was waiting, and, with a delightful motherly air, set about feeding me. When I was comfortably settled, she said, "Now, tell me all about it. How did Mr. Ap-Rhys look?"

"Splendid."

"And Miss Haley?"

"First rate."

"Did she seem to mind the costume?"

"I don't think so. She was very graceful. *Jambes nerveuses*. So few people have them, you know. By the way, Ruth, I wish you would call upon her and ask her to dinner on Sunday. She lives with her mother."

Ruth looked up with an air of hesitancy, and her under lip was drawn in for a moment, but she said, "Very well. If you wish it. But I shall be thinking of the *jambes nerveuses* under the table. Poor thing! I hope she hates it."

"And you needn't be jealous of——"

"Stop. For shame!" cried Ruth; but

she blushed in delight. "I suppose we must ask Mr. Ap-Rhys, too," she said, after a pause.

"Oh, yes, of course."

"Very well," she consented, but I fancied that her face fell.

The next day she went to town to leave a card with a note of invitation at Miss Haley's lodgings. She met that lady at the door, and in the evening gave me her impressions.

"She is dreadfully fascinating—rather too strikingly dressed, perhaps, like most actresses—but evidently a lady. She asked me in and gave me tea in such a kind and easy way that I did not feel at all like a cat in a strange garret as I had expected, and she said such nice things about you. You needn't blush, dear. It is your skill as a dramatist, not your personal appearance, that is the charm. But be happy, she is coming on Sunday."

"And so is Ap-Rhys, so that's all right," said I, but somehow I felt that it was all wrong.

The fact is that I cannot help making love to a nice woman, and I reflected that I had

made a good deal of love to Mary Haley during the last month, not of course in declared terms, but in those little attentions and kind looks which I flatter myself I understand very well. My attentions were not so pointed as to alarm, but I fear that they were not so vague as to be misunderstood. It has been said by some philosophers that man is naturally polygamous, and, while I certainly loved Ruth none the less, I began to love Mary Haley more and more. I, myself, am of the opinion that Affection, or the power of loving, is not given in a measured quantity to be bestowed in one lump or to be distributed piecemeal in larger or smaller morsels, but rather is like its sister, Charity, capable of indefinite expansion. If it be possible for a father to love equally each of his children as it is born, it should also be possible for him to love equally each of his wives as he acquires her, without prejudice to the first comers. It is, of course, possible that a wife or child might be of such surpassing beauty and charm as to engross the whole attention, and consequently be the only love of the husband or father. And such, dear

Madam, is, no doubt, your own case. Obviously the reverse of the situation would be true, and had I six loving wives they would each be capable of loving others beside myself.

These remarks are not offered to the reader as an incentive to breaking the laws which our modern civilization has considered just, but rather as a plea for those people who, though married, are happy—and flirt.

Now, I loved Ruth, and her only, but, knowing the weakness of my own very human nature, and supposing her to be in like case, I realized for the first time that I had done a foolish thing in bringing temptation so near to us both.

"If," said I to myself, as I silently finished my supper, "if, indeed, my idea is right, why should I not,"—but just then Ruth brought me my pipe and tobacco and laid her hand upon my shoulder. My brilliant sophisms dwindled to a farthing rush-light.

CHAPTER X.

THE Sunday dinner party was very gay after all. I was in high spirits, and Ruth caught them from me. I had never seen her so merry and witty. Brindsley was present, besides Ap-Rhys and Miss Haley; another lady of the Company and Mrs. Vanne with Mr. Point, the well-known black-and-white artist, made up a party of eight. There was no dull waiting for conversation to kindle into talk, but wit and good-nature unloosed tongues at once. Miss Haley sat by me, and of course Ap-Rhys was placed next to Ruth.

As eyes grew brighter, a silent battle seemed to begin between the opposite corners of the table. Ruth and her neighbour joined forces against Miss Haley and myself. It was a struggle of magnetism, and I found myself combining with Miss Haley in a fight for supremacy over the other two. I was not able then to exactly realize the situation, which was indeed complicated. I cared for Ruth much more than for Mary Haley, and

Mary Haley cared for Ap-Rhys much more than for me, but we united our strength and tried by greater power of will to bring them to submission. It was not a pretty game. The devil invented it long ago. The common name for it is jealousy.

I was quite sure that Ap-Rhys was falling in love with Ruth, and that Ruth knew it, and, admiring and liking him, was alarmed and distressed. Blaming Ap-Rhys as the cause of her uneasiness, she, at times, woman-like, hated him, and then forgave and pitied him. In one mood she had, probably as a warning, spoken to me of her dislike, and, in another, she was making amends to him for the injury.

It is true that all this might have happened had we lived in an ordinary dwelling, but the Semi-detached House, with its consequent independence of life and secrecy, made us no doubt over-watchful and sensitive.

The dinner passed off gaily nevertheless. Mrs. Vanne looked at me sharply once or twice, somewhat to my confusion, for she had known me very well. Half in anger and half in bravado, I came to her side in the

music room, where we were accustomed to enjoy smoking and music after our informal dinners.

The others of the party had changed partners. Brindsley was at the piano with Mary Haley, Ap-Rhys was talking to the other actress, and Point was making little drawings of Ruth, who turned a laughing face to him.

"I'm Lightning Rod, I suppose," said Mrs. Vanne.

"Alternating currents, you know—" I began, but she broke in.

"You are very rude."

"You are very kind."

"That means that you hope I may be. What do you want?"

"Will you give it to me if I tell?"

"Certainly not."

"And yet advice is so cheap," I murmured.

"And usually nasty. People seldom take it."

"I know. But it wasn't advice, it was sympathy."

"I think I understand.—The confessional.—The talking over of self to me who already knows the worst of you."

"You Dear!" I exclaimed. "That is the very thing, but I did not know it."

"That itself is confession enough, and, as you do not want advice, I shall withhold sympathy until you deserve it, which is not now, and unless——" But our conversation was interrupted by a song from Miss Haley, and after that the party broke up, and Mrs. Vanne had no opportunity to finish her sentence. I guessed well enough, however, that she intended a warning.

When our guests had left, I went into the library to compose my spirits by a pipe.

Ruth presently joined me, and, seating herself on the fender stool, began to poke the fire.

To break the silence, I hazarded—"The dinner went off very well, did it not?"

"I think Miss Haley is very bright and pretty," said Ruth.

"Yes, she and Ap-Rhys make a very good pair," I replied.

I knew that we were trying to put things right, but, do what we would, the devil of pride tongue-tied us, and the master word that should open our hearts to each other

could not be spoken. After a few indifferent sentences, Ruth rose and left me. As she did not say good-night, I supposed that I should see her again, but, when I went up-stairs, the Dreadful Door was closed. She could not endure a false kiss while her heart was sore, and, unhappy as I felt, I was glad of her honesty.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN I awoke on the following morning my wits were clearer, and I saw very plainly that the trouble between Ruth and myself was not caused by any real wrongs but by the imaginings of our own souls. I laughed at the idea of anything serious between Ap-Rhys and my wife, and Mary Haley seemed to me merely a nice young woman rather to be protected, but nothing more.

It was true that I had flirted with her, and I blamed myself for my misconduct; but I determined to confess my fault to Ruth at once, and I felt that a few honest and affectionate words would set all right.

After dressing, I left my room, my heart full of tenderness and the pride that apes humility. I was behaving beautifully. The Dreadful Door was, however, still closed and locked, and I had to breakfast alone and unshriven.

A little later I heard the noise of wheels

upon gravel, and looking out saw Ruth get into her brougham at her own door and drive away towards town. I felt deserted and aggrieved—I had meant so well.

In an hour's time I received a telegram from Ap-Rhys asking me to lunch with my wife and Miss Haley. After some hesitation I accepted. I did not want to go, but it was better than being absent. I was, too, curious to see if Miss Haley and Ap-Rhys had made it up. The luncheon party proved to be commonplace enough. I learned that Ap-Rhys had met Ruth in town and begged her to chaperone Miss Haley. The two artists talked a great deal about the new play which was to come out that evening, and Ruth and I found ourselves in a silent tête-a-tête. Once as her eyes caught mine the corners of her mouth bent to the beginning of a smile. As we rose to leave Ruth said, "I am going to drive Miss Haley home. Shall I call for you anywhere afterward?"

Now I had intended calling upon Mrs. Vanne that afternoon to finish the interrupted conversation of the evening before, but I promptly accepted Ruth's invitation, and

asked her to pick me up at the Boot and Saddle Club. In due time she came for me, and, as I got into the brougham, my eye was caught by the twinkle of some silver thing which was almost covered by her skirts. I picked it up and recognized Ap-Rhys's match-box.

"Hullo!" said I.

"What is it?" asked Ruth carelessly.

"Ap-Rhys's match-box."

"No, really!" was all she said.

"He must have lost it," said I.

"It seems so," said she turning her face away from me and looking out of the window. "I would not worry about it if I were you," she added, "you can give it back to him, you know."

Black hell raged in my heart for a moment, but I controlled myself, and soon was able to ask, calmly enough, if I might smoke.

"Yes, certainly," she answered. I took out a cigarette, and was about to use one of Ap-Rhys's matches when I hastily thrust the box into my pocket and found a light of my own. As I opened Ap-Rhys's case I had seen a small folded piece of note paper with

Ruth's writing on it, and read the word "dear."

I had sense enough to know that it was no time for asking questions, for the lightest word might weigh as an unforgivable offence. It might be all right. It surely was all right. But—what might follow that "but" was so dreadful that I forced myself into a temporary state of confidence, and save for a few indifferent remarks smoked in silence until we arrived at home.

We separated to dress for an early dinner, at which Ruth joined me, and the exciting topic of the operette served to pass the time well enough, and I think deadened the pain that was grinding at my heart.

All the world knows that the play was a triumphant success. A very distinguished personage, the Colonel-in-Chief of my old regiment, was present, and sent for me to compliment me upon the piece, and he unofficially attended a supper party at which Ruth, Miss Haley and Mrs. Vanne with Ap-Rhys and Brindsley were guests.

I had found a chance to give Ap-Rhys his match-box as we were leaving the theatre.

"I do not know what is inside," I said. He had coloured as I produced the box, but apparently did not understand my allusion, for he calmly replied as he slipped it into his pocket, "Matches, of course; I don't keep bank notes and combustibles together." The ladies having given permission we smoked after supper, and Ap-Rhys, impatient of the slow progress of the servant with the taper, drew his match-box from his pocket. He opened it, tried to shake out a match, and saw the paper which he pulled a little way out and then thrust back and shut the box with a click. He seemed a little bewildered, but, though he kept his eyes away from mine, I saw a light in them that I knew too well.

Ruth was seated next to the distinguished personage, and was talking to him with great spirit as I judged from the frequent bursts of laughter. Her face was animated and her colour brighter than usual. She seemed to be enjoying herself, but there was a look of challenge in her eyes as they caught mine. Ap-Rhys and Mary Haley sat side by side, and seemed to have a good deal to say to each other. I fancied that they were watching Ruth and me, and were wondering.

When the party broke up, Ruth told me that she was going to drive Mary Haley home, and offered to call for me anywhere I chose.

I thanked her, but declined her offer under the pretext that I might be late. I was very angry and reckless, and I meant to try to forget her for a few hours. Mrs. Vanne was the last lady to leave, and, as I put her into her brougham, she gathered her skirts into the farther corner and said, "I will put you down anywhere you wish if you like to come."

"The Devil is kind to his own," I said to myself as I scrambled in.

Bessie made no attempt to resist as I took her hand in mine, but when I tried to draw her face towards me she straightened herself in her corner, "Don't be silly," she said, "I'm not your wife. Take your arm away, please."

Clever as women may be in saying "No" when they mean "Yes," there is no mistaking a "No" that is meant—and I knew at once that Bessie was in earnest. To cover my confusion, I began protestations of affection which fell dead before her gaylaugh.

"Here you are at your club," said she, and gave me her hand with a gentle pressure as I said good-night. "It is always a compliment you know," she added.

My thoughts were not pleasant as I drove home in a cab an hour later.

I had begun the day with love and repentance in my heart, and, as I closed my half of *The Dreadful Door* on going to bed, my heart was so full of anger and pride that I refused to try the other half of the door to see if Ruth had locked herself in. I did not even know if she had returned.

As I smoked my last pipe lying in bed, I reflected that it is not an easy or simple thing to make even a good woman happy.

CHAPTER XII.

THAT "Night brings advice" is no doubt true in many of the difficult places in life; but the charm failed to work for my benefit.

I sincerely regretted my own indiscretions—to call them by no worse name—but I could not see a way to making it up with Ruth until the suspicious affair of the note in the match-box was explained. I did not believe for one moment that Ruth had gone, or had any intention of going beyond a dangerously deep flirtation with Ap-Rhys in reprisal for my attentions to Mary Haley and, possibly, Mrs. Vanne. I knew, however, that women often slip suddenly much further than they expect or desire when treading the dangerous but delightful paths that zigzag that aspect of the Hill of Life from which the most enchanting prospects are viewed—"A sigh too deep or a kiss too long" is very often astounding in its effect.

It was true that Ap-Rhys was an old comrade and my friend; but I had seen the

enchantress Passion put both friendship and honour to sleep in other men as good as he, and it was not very likely that he would hold off if encouraged. Besides, I had not behaved very well to him in the case of Mary Haley.

So, after an uneasy night and a solitary breakfast, I set out for a long walk, hoping by healthy exercise to clear my brain and arrive at some decision as to what was wisest and best to do. My walk took me a good deal further up the river than I had intended, and, growing hungry, I had luncheon at a river-side inn much used by boating men. There was no suggestion of clandestine excursions in the furnishing and conduct of the hostelry, but rather an unromantic beer-and-tobacco keep-your-muscle-up style about the place that acted as a tonic and sedative to my nerves.

I strode along happily on my homeward way, for I had made up my mind to tell Ruth that I was sorry and to let her tell me the rest, which I was persuaded she would do.

It was about four o'clock when I got home, just in time to see the Distinguished Personsonage enter a very quiet brougham and

drive away from my wife's private door. Now, great as was the honour, I had not desired and did not welcome the distinction. It marked at least one more stage in the widening separation between my wife and myself. My heart hardened within me, and the good resolve formed during my walk was laid aside.

As I entered the hall I found lying on the table a note from Ap-Rhys, which ran :—

"Dear Lee,—

I found the enclosed bit of paper in my match-box after you returned it to me. I am sure that it was not there when I mislaid the box, so it must belong to you.

Yours faithfully,

EVAN AP-RHYS."

It was apparently the same folded slip of paper that I had seen, and it proved to be a shopping list, and the word "dear" was preceded by "too". I turned into the library to think it over. That the slip might be a clever substitute for the original paper was possible, but I could not, and, indeed, would not believe that Ruth was so deep in guilt and deceit as to be driven to such a strata-

gem. Moreover, I remembered Ap-Rhys's astonishment when he first caught sight of the paper, and I supposed that, not knowing exactly what it was, he had thought it safer to wait and inspect it when alone. He had no doubt done so, and, finding that it was not a love letter, had, as a matter of course, returned it to me.

I chuckled as I thought of his disappointment, and the chuckle warmed into a laugh as I realized what a fool I had been. My laughter put to flight the devils of pride and jealousy which had beset me, and I resolved anew to make it up with Ruth as soon as possible. I did not propose to pass through the Dreadful Door, but, as we were to dine in town that night, I decided to wait until our drive home, when both of us, softened by tender recollections, would be in a forgiving mood. Besides, I had to apologize, and that is easier to do in the dark.

I fear that in spite of effort I was not a very gay addition to the dinner party that night. I even drank a glass or two of champagne more than is my custom ; but I had in prospect self-humiliation, and that is a dose

that men of a high stomach desire to swallow without delay when it has been prescribed, mixed and accepted.

It was with a sigh of relief that I welcomed the breaking up of the dinner party, and, as I put my wife into the brougham, I asked her leave to smoke. She gently but carelessly granted it, but sat silent, leaning her head back in her corner of the carriage. Her ungloved left hand lay idly in her lap, and, although a tingle ran from my own right hand up my arm and across and down to my heart, I dared not move to take that dear palm to mine until I had made my peace. I smoked for some minutes, and then, summoning my courage, I took a couple of long breaths, and said in a voice that sounded unlike my own:—

"Ruth, dear! Will you forgive me? I've been a fool—but nothing more. I'll tell you all about it if you wish."

Ruth remained silent, and, bewildered, I hurried on.

"Miss Haley——"

"I will not hear that girl's name," cried Ruth passionately, and, starting to an up-

right position, she turned her shoulders to me and her face to the window. Immediately she was shaken by a fit of silent weeping. "Let me alone, let me alone," she commanded as I attempted to soothe her. "You don't know, you don't know." As she repeated the last sentence her voice sank to a quavering in-drawn whisper.

I had never seen Ruth in such a mood, and was out of my wits from fear. "My God," she exclaimed in a sort of choking sob, and then there was silence. She seemed not to be thinking of me, but leaned forward with a corner of her handkerchief in her teeth, and I caught a gleam of them and the shine of her fixed eyes as we passed a wayside lamp. As we drew near to our home, Ruth gave herself a little shake and assumed an appearance of composure. On entering the hall she shot a glance into the library where the tray, bright with glass, stood near the fire and invited to confidential talk. She hesitated for a moment, and then bidding me a brief "Good-night" went up the stairs. I heard the Dreadful Door close behind her.

Left alone, I mechanically turned to the

hall table where some letters were lying. I shuffled them through my fingers carelessly, but one discreet looking formally addressed envelope drew my attention, I knew not why. It was for Ruth, and, as I turned it over, I remarked a plain stamped seal of the Royal Arms and the initials G. and B. Now the day before I had passed the window of a well-known firm of fashionable furnishers of layettes, and the initials corresponded with their names. I tore the envelope open, my heart knocking in my breast, and read a formal acknowledgment of some new instructions regarding the lace upon some things whose future wearer was not yet of this world.

"And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly Host."

I know not why this verse of the story of the Nativity came to my mind, but I kept repeating it to myself as I stood by the library fire in the still night. The Great Mystery of the Ages was present with me, and, as I thought of the Mother and Child, I felt unworthy of that high companionship. With a prayer in my teeth I went upstairs and laid my hand upon the Dreadful Door, when

I heard a sound of sobbing within. Pushing the door open I found Ruth lying upon the floor, a forlorn heap of lawn and lace. She let me lift her up and carry her to my room.

Our reconciliation was too sacred a thing to be described, but, as Ruth laid her happy face against my shoulder, she said in a whisper—with a little laugh—"The Semi-detached Idea must be given up after all."

* * * * *

The old mansion has since been restored to its original form. There is no Dreadful Door, and little feet now roam unchecked through the kindly house.



THE LAST STAR.

I WAS gambling with the Devil—I knew very well that many had tried the game before and had lost, but smiling Chance beckoned me on.

An admiring and attentive audience of angels and imps were perched upon the seats of the billiard-room.

It was pool, and St. Peter marked the game. As he rattled the balls the Seven Cardinal Sins dropped the tips of their cues upon the table and came in.

I was White. Red left me safe. When it came to my turn to play Lust gave me an easy one, and I put him down. I was thinking more of my player just then; encouraged, I tried a difficult shot on Vanity, and sold myself.

“First off White,” said St. Peter. The angels sighed, and the imps chuckled and offered unholy bets.

This steadied me a bit, and when I came in again I put down three besetting sins and felt comfortable.

The Devil and the Sins played a gentlemanly game, and it was not really Lust’s fault that he fluked me in on a kiss.

“Second off White,” said St. Peter.

The angels were sad, and the imps proffered hypocritical sympathy.

The Sins potted each other without compunction, and the Devil made it hot for them all round when he got a chance. I braced up, and, playing safe for a while, I holed the Devil once, and besides him two easy Sins.

I began to feel confident, and soon had a chance when I killed Lust, and lay well to get Pride and Hate, but, as I eagerly pocketed them I overlooked Avarice, and as he dribbled me in I gasped out.

“Star One.”

“The Star is gone,” said St. Peter.

“White is dead.”

And, as the Devil and the Sins pounded their cues upon the floor, the echoes were wakened in Hell, while the angels with whimpering wings fled back to Paradise.



THE
ENCHANTED TYPEWRITER.

THIS story was told us by Brunyate in the smoking-room of his yacht, "The Witch," as she rolled and glided over the long Atlantic swells on her way southward.

We were a small and carefully chosen party, for it was to be a three months' cruise, all sound whist players and men of experience. No ladies were on board, and that was perhaps why we celebrated the anniversary of our host's wedding day with sentimental sympathy.

Our host had not yet attained to middle age, and was very rich; but the remarkable thing about him was that, having made his fortune very rapidly by speculation in stocks, he had the wisdom and strength of mind to retire from business, and consolidate his wealth at the time of his marriage to his charming wife. In vain his old associates in successful syndicates in-

vited him to join them in the most promising schemes. He steadily declined new ventures, and, indeed, employed a trustworthy broker to invest his fortune in the safest securities as the agent thought best, and he refused to give any instructions.

At the low rate of interest thus secured he had an income far larger than any man, though assisted by a fashionable wife, could fairly spend.

A good education in books, and a taste for the arts and sport of the nobler sort, enabled him to defy the tedium that comes to the habitual man of business, when, after a life of toil, he tries to enjoy unaccustomed ease.

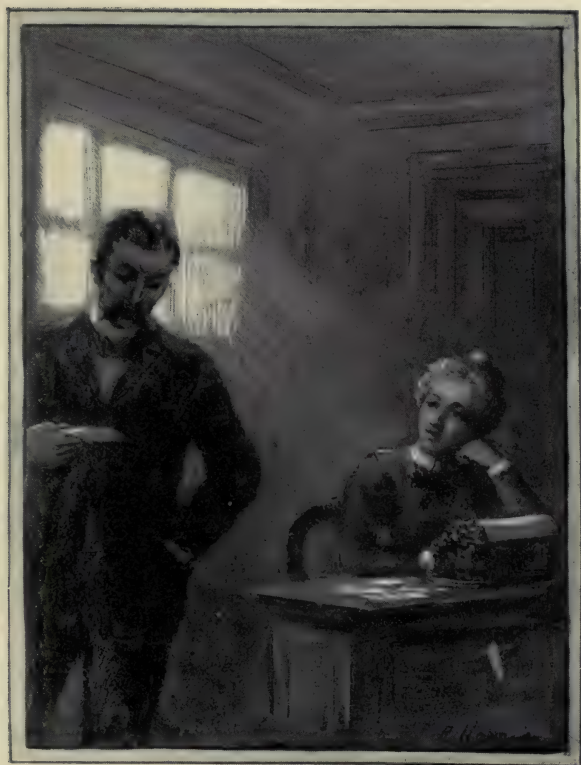
We were, as I have said, in a sentimental humour that evening, and whist was tacitly ignored. We had all taken more wine than usual at dinner when toasting the anniversary, and our spirits had attained to that charming altitude where wit is nimble and the heart generous. The talk turned by chance to tales of mystery, and each succeeding story was received with respectful attention. Here and there a question was asked, but our agnostic circle knew too much to doubt anything. Pre-

sently Brunyate, who had been fidgetting in his seat, said,

“I’ll tell you a story, if you like, and a true one, too. It happened to a man I knew well.”

A hum of pleasant expectancy arose from the little company, for Brunyate had talent as a story-teller. He took a pull at his whiskey-and-soda, and, encouraged by the applause, began :

“We’ll call the man Bunker, if you like. He was a young outside broker in Wall street. He had not enough capital to buy a seat at the Stock Exchange, but by hard work he managed to make a living, and not much more, out of unlisted stocks and bonds. He had a small sky-high office and his staff consisted in a girl typewriter. She was pretty and a lady and unusually clever. Bunker was unmarried, but he valued the girl so highly that he did not think of making love to her. Of course he was kind to her, but that was all. I fancy that the girl was little used to kindness. At any rate she was very grateful, and took a deep interest in the business of the office. She soon knew all about the stock business, and, having a remarkably good memory and a head for



figures, she was often consulted by Bunker. Her manner to him was respectful and reserved, and no womanly feelings were suffered to lower her dignity.

The little business began to take on an air of prosperity, there was some money in the bank and Bunker was able to speak with his enemies at the gate.

One morning he had to let himself into his office, for Bessie—that was her name—had not arrived. At eleven o'clock he sent a messenger uptown to find out what was the matter. She was dead. Of course he was awfully cut up; but he buried her tenderly—he never found her friends—and then engaged another girl. She proved steady-going but no more, and, as the business of the office had got behind-hand, Bunker used to dine down town and go back to his desk to work alone.

It was while he was at his books one night that he heard—rap—rap—click—pause—rap—from the typewriting machine at the other end of the room. The noise sounded far away, for of course the cover was over the machine. Bunker did not at first notice the familiar sound for he was absorbed in his occupation; but as

the rapping and clicking went steadily on he lifted his head and listened. The noise seemed to come from his own typewriter, and, in incredulous wonder, he rose from his desk and took a step or two towards it. The sound ceased instantly, and, after a moment of puzzled doubt, he reseated himself, supposing that he had been deceived by some accidental noise easily accounted for in a building full of electricity and hot-water heaters.

“Rap—rap—rap—rap—click—rap—pause—rap—rap” went the machine again.

This time Bunker listened intently. The sound certainly came from the machine in the corner of the room, and, as the busy keys rattled in their sockets, he recognized Bessie’s rapid manipulation which was quite different from that of the new girl. Once again he rose and walked towards the sound, which as before ceased as he approached.

Bunker was a clever man and had wit enough to remember that outside of mathematics there is no demonstrated impossibility; so he laid aside his pen, lit a pipe and waited. Again the rapping and clicking began and continued in haste with a certain imperative

measure. Now he had of course heard a good deal about spirit-rapping and had trifled with Planchette, both of which he believed to be mechanical toys set in motion by human nerves, and he remembered Madame Blavatsky's slips of paper.

"Paper is what she wants," he ejaculated—and, not without a certain dread of walking through a ghost, he took the cover from the machine, and, inserting a sheet of virgin paper, retired to his desk. He had scarcely seated himself when the rapping and clicking recommenced, and he could see that the paper was being gradually shoved up over the top of the machine. He told me that he was frightened beyond his experience. He pinched himself—talked to himself—tried to relight his pipe, but put the match in his mouth and rubbed the pipe stem on his leg, and, finally overcome by horror, prepared to make a bolt for the door, when the machine suddenly stopped work with a word of six letters.

It was little wonder that Bunker was frightened, for, while the japanned machine with its ivory keys and countless ribs was harmless and commonplace, the Invisible Presence that sat behind it was dreadful.

Still the paper had to be read, and, nerving himself to the effort, he steadily walked over, and, pressing the lever, drew the printed page out. He expected to feel a touch of a dead hand. Hastily retreating to his desk, he read the letter—for a letter it was.

“Dear,

“Buy Mugwump common and Manhattan Tramways. Sell Sugar and Tobaccos. I will tell you when to cover deals.

“Bessie.”

I fancy that Bunker had a sleepless night, but the next morning he gave orders for a hundred shares of each of the stocks which Bessie had named, and at the end of the day he was about \$1,000 ahead. Of course he was at his office again after dinner, eagerly awaiting further instructions, but without dread, for he now believed that it was Bessie's loving spirit that guided him to fortune. He loaded up the machine with a sheet of paper, nor did he wait long, for presently the rap-rap-click began and a new message was sent him.

The next day he acted upon Bessie's advice more boldly and made five thousand dollars. Now if a man has twelve hours start of the mar-

ket it does not take long to make an enormous fortune, but Bunker knew too much to share his information, and he felt sure that secrecy was a condition of his relations with the dead girl—so he distributed his orders among a number of offices, and although it began to be noticed that he was smart and on the right side of the market, no one guessed that he was a very rich man even for New York. He afterwards told me that all that time he seemed to be in a dream.

The Street "points" and sage prophesies of the financial newspapers kept him from growing mad for they made him laugh. Before long he actually tired of making money and took a holiday by Bessie's advice. So he went away from hot restless New York to a village in the far north where the good Americans go when they are alive, and where the girls are pretty and you fall over golf clubs on all the verandahs. There, being unaccustomed to idleness, he fell deeply and luckily in love with a very nice girl, and a month later returned to New York an engaged man. Of course he could not tell Bessie this, but he had a strong belief that she must know all about whatever touched him nearly. So it was with considerable anxiety that he visited his

office at night to receive such a message as his ghostly adviser should send.

The machine promptly clicked a short letter in which Bessie hoped that he had enjoyed his holiday, and proceeded to give instructions for new operations on the morrow.

Bunker had enough knowledge of the sex to guess that Bessie in her incomplete spirit state might be quite as jealous of a flesh-and-blood maiden as if her spirit were enclosed in a warm and pretty body, so he only bought and sold a hundred shares or so of each of the stocks indicated—and at the close of the market each one of them shewed a loss of several points.

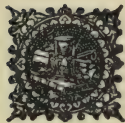
He did not go to his office that night, but next morning he took the typewriting machine and by accident dropped it into the East River from the rail of a ferry boat. Then he bought some flowers and journeyed out to Bessie's grave, where he laid them by the little headstone as a propitiation and a farewell. Afterwards he went out and teased the other girl until she consented to marry him as soon as possible.

Here the narrator paused for a long and much needed drink. We had no wish to intrude upon what might be family secrets so we all followed

his example in silence save for some polite expressions of interest and astonishment. But guessing our desire he added—

“ Bunker never heard from Bessie again and he did not lose his money—nor did he ever tell Mrs. Bunker how he made it.”

“ Let’s have a rubber.”



THE ARBITRATOR.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HARGRAVES,	Act. 35	Guardian to Angelica.
ALGERNON,	Act. 24	In love with Angelica.
HARRY,	Act. 26	“ “
ANGELICA,	Act. 20	Ward of Hargraves.

The scene passes in Angelica's boudoir. The furniture is simple but very comfortable. No knots of ribbon or towels on the chair backs. A few good etchings and water colors. A bronze of the young Augustus on a dwarf book-case which is well filled. A wood fire is burning on the hearth.

HARGRAVES—(*Solus*) “ I wonder what's up now ?” (Takes note from his pocket and reads) :

“ Dear Guardian :

“ Can you call about four o'clock this afternoon ? I want your advice upon a most important question. Please don't fail.

Yours affectionately,

ANGELICA.”

“ She has never been extravagant, and besides she has too much money for that sort of trouble. She has always managed her

love affairs herself, besides—(*turns to chimney-piece*) Um! two new photographs in a twin frame. Young Algernon and Harry. Fee fo fum!”

Enter Angelica. Crosses quickly to Hargraves and takes both his hands. He gravely kisses her forehead.

ANGELICA—“It was so good of you to come. I have worried until I have made myself ill and you must help me.”

HARGRAVES—“All right.”

ANGELICA—“Now make yourself comfortable and smoke if you please.”

She leads him to a deep arm-chair at corner of chimney, and seats herself on a stool in the shadow of opposite corner. He smokes while Angelica meditatively arranges logs in the fire. Then she lays down the poker and produces a handkerchief from somewhere and folds and unfolds it neatly on her knee. Silence for ten seconds.

“Well! it is this. Someone wants,—I mean they want to marry me.”

HARGRAVES—“Impossible!”

ANGELICA—“Don’t chaff! It’s true, and they want it so much, and I like them awfully.”

HARGRAVES—“Polyandry?”

ANGELICA—“You are most unkind. I want help and advice from my only friend in the world, and you are only—only—(*sobs*) ‘horrid’ (*handkerchief at eyes*).

HARGRAVES—"Forgive me, my dear. I did not know it was so serious. I would not grieve you on purpose. But do you mean that you really love both of them?" (*handkerchief comes away from eyes and is rolled into a little ball.*)

ANGELICA—(*Nods her head despairingly*) "I am afraid so."

HARGRAVES—"God bless my soul!" (*relights cigar.*)

ANGELICA—"Yes, and you see they are so exactly the opposite of each other that I can't compare them. Dear Algernon is dark and fond of books and art and all that, while dear Harry is fair and is devoted to field sports of all kinds and does not care for any higher art than my photograph, and thinks that music is only stuff to make waltzes of. And when I try to make up my mind which I like the best, the other one always has something which the other hasn't."

HARGRAVES—"Which do you think of first when you wake in the night?"

ANGELICA—"I don't think of them at all. I think of you."

HARGRAVES—(*Starting violently*) “Me!!!”

ANGELICA—“Yes. Why not? Of course I’m fonder of you than of anybody else. My guardian has been very good to me always, only I don’t think you really love me as much as you did when I was a little girl. You are more distant somehow. Perhaps I am not so nice as I was.”

HARGRAVES—“The age of innocence still lasts!”

ANGELICA—“No, it doesn’t. I have been out three seasons and I know everything—everything. I can talk to you as I like because you are my guardian and have known me since I was a child. And if I do love you, you know it’s quite different from the way I love poor dear Algernon and Harry. And I am so tired of it all” (*handkerchief lightly dabbed against eyes and then unrolled and pressed against lips.*)

HARGRAVES — (*Aside*) “God of Mercy! What’s she driving at?” (*aloud*) “Well, my dear, I’m afraid I can’t help you. You must make your own choice, and when you are happily married I shall be happy too.”

I see two new photographs on the chimney. Are they—?”

ANGELICA—“Yes. What do you think of them?”

HARGRAVES—(*Rises and again relights cigar*). Well, they're both very good-looking. The fair one is cheery and the other might be very tender. Whichever it is I hope you will be very happy with him.”

ANGELICA—(*Springs from corner, seizes the frame and dashes it into the fire*). “Damn! There! It's your fault for taking it so coolly. And I am not a fool. I know that you love me yourself. Only because you're my guardian you would not tell. I found it out when you began to put a distance between us four years ago. And these two pestered me, and I thought it would make you say something or show something. And—”

HARGRAVES—(*Gently*) “Angelica!”

ANGELICA—(*Slowly*) “Yes —”

HARGRAVES—“Come here.” (*Angelica comes slowly toward him, the handkerchief is a ball again. Hargraves places his hand under*

her chin and lifts her face to him.) " Now, look at me, and tell me, is it true that I am your first waking thought ? "

ANGELICA—(*Struggling a little*). " Yes. "

And the Court of Arbitration was closed in due and ancient form.



THE

Duchess and the Looking Glass.

A very distinguished company occupied the smoking room at Sparrowhawk Towers. The ladies had gone to their rooms to gossip and to indulge in dissipation more elegant than that of the men, but on similar lines.

The smoking room company included soldiers, sailors, diplomats and men of letters, who were mostly men of action, while art was worthily represented. They were none of them very young, and the track of their travels had left very few places on the globe unmarked. Their experiences were equally cosmopolitan and would have filled many books, as indeed those of some of the company did.

I was there because Sparrowhawk is my brother-in-law. I am not a distinguished man, so I sat quietly enjoying myself as tongues gradually loosened, and, one reminiscence provoking another, story after story was told—

and all new, or, at least, interesting, because they were true. Subjects which might lead to controversy were tacitly avoided or ignored.

A genial scepticism pervaded the talk, and even the Right Reverend Bishop of Nomansland, who knew more about Afghanistan and had seen more hard fighting than most soldiers, was not out of place. It was, however, when he had finished his pipe and whiskey and water and left the room, waving an almost imperceptible blessing—a celestial courtesy that embraced all and could wound none—that the talk ran in freer channels and not so limpid. For the stories that move men to wonder, sympathy or horror are usually founded upon a human tragedy or upon a comedy with a tragic side.

The most distinguished man present—not excepting a very distinguished person indeed—was Hopeton, an Englishman of middle age. He had been diplomat, soldier, sportsman, traveller, novelist, writer on “The Times” staff, man of the world and religious enthusiast, all at once. Trusted by the Government and consulted on affairs of gravest importance, he might have held high office;

but the roving habit of body and the independent spirit which continually sought after unrevealed truth of the highest kind, had prevented his putting on harness. Deeply religious, he turned from the narrow creeds of modern Christianity to the boundless but pathless fields of speculative psychology, and he firmly believed that, for him, the spirit-land sometimes gave up its secrets.

We were talking of Forbes Mitchell's "Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny." Three of us had been there—and the incident of the "Fey" Highlander being discussed, they led to tales of second sight and from that to hypnotism.

Now it is worth noting that each succeeding story of the marvellous or supernatural was received with grave respect; a pertinent question was sometimes asked, but that wise and experienced company had seen too much that was strange and unaccountable to challenge the possibility of the tale.

Hopeton sat a listener, almost hidden by his own tobacco smoke, when, by a dexterous question, Sparrowhawk led him to tell the following story. He crossed one leg over his

knee and thoughtfully rubbed a black silk ankle before he began.

“Yes, of course, I have seen some queer things of that kind, but one of the most remarkable cases of the influence of one mind over another came under my own observation at Hombourg some years ago. It was in the height of the season and there were lots of people whom I knew, so it was very amusing.

One evening twelve of us dined at the Casino, and after dinner, we were listening to the music of the band when Scrimgeour of the F. O. joined us, bringing with him an over-carefully dressed man with a keen face, whom he presently introduced to the Duchess of Towers, our chaperone—of course I can't give her real name—as Professor Jay Wilbur, of Chicago, and a mind-reader of great skill.

After some pleasant chat, the Duchess said that we had all heard of the Professor's wonderful powers—which was not strictly true—and that we were longing to see some exhibition of them. She winced slightly as the Professor fixed his bold eyes upon hers and said :

“Why, certainly, Duchess, with the great-

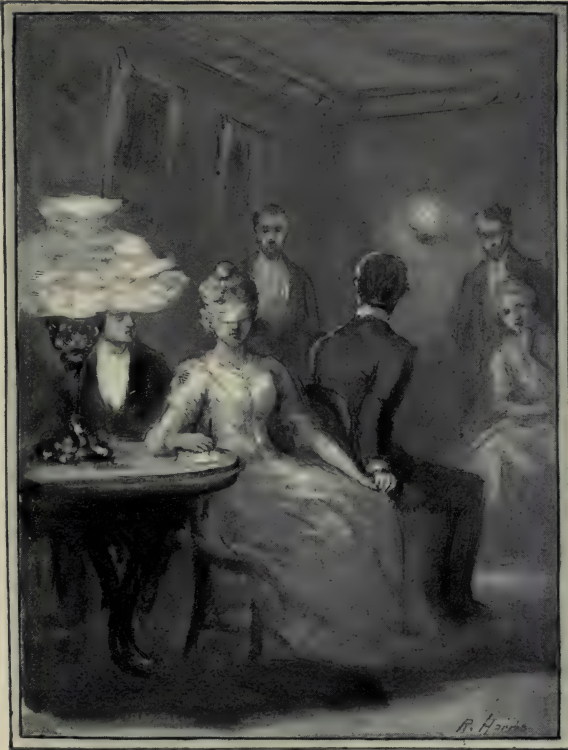
“est pleasure. May I have the honour of
“beginning with yourself?”

“Oh, dear no—thank you,” she cried, shrinking away a little. “My mind is not
“superior. Please try one of the gentlemen.”

The Professor looked disappointed, but was so obliging as to accept a substitute, and gave us a first rate exhibition of his powers. Whether it was magnetism or trickery, or a mixture of both, I don't know, but he mystified us all very satisfactorily.

When the party broke up, the Professor felt that he had advertised himself very well indeed.

Four or five of us went with the Duchess to her apartment at the Kaiserhof, and, very naturally, we talked about the wonders we had just witnessed, and I imagine that we felt that excitement of the brain and nerves which usually attends any discussion of the supernatural. Some one told a “Planchette” story which was immediately capped, and, on my observing that a pencil held in the fingers above a blank paper would work just as well, the Duchess suddenly threw away her cigarette, and said: “Please give me a pencil some-



body, I am going to try it." She paused a moment and added, "But no one must see it until I show it. It might be something horrid. Come, Mr. Hopeton, you shall help me." Now we all loved the Duchess, who was as beautiful as she was good—even though she did smoke cigarettes—and I felt proud of her confidence.

She seated herself, her right hand holding a pencil above the paper laid on a small table. I sat with my back to it and held her left hand in mine. Now, I myself possess some magnetic powers, which are strong at times. They were very strong just then, for I was holding the hand of one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and I tried my hardest to make her think of me. I should blush to own it if I thought that any of the present company would have been more virtuous. Presently my arm began to tingle, and the Duchess's hand fluttered in mine, and I knew that something was going to happen, and I myself fell into a sort of trance for a few moments. The click of the pencil, as it fell from her fingers, woke me up, but I did not move until she carelessly withdrew her left hand from mine,

and, resting her elbows upon the table, held her face between her hands as she pored over the scrawled line upon the paper. I felt weak and went across the room to help myself to a drink. The other people present sat in silence and were evidently very curious.

At length the Duchess pushed back her chair with a little laugh and said: "It's all rubbish. Come and see, Mr. Hopeton—" "and yet, do you know," she added, "I almost fancied that I had been asleep for a few moments." This struck me as being odd, and I at first hoped to be able to decipher the writing, if indeed writing it was, but the irregular continuous meandering pencil-mark was as unintelligible to me as it eventually proved to the rest of the company to whom it was shown.

"May I have another try at the paper at my rooms?" I asked as I said good night to the Duchess, whose cheeks were flushed and who looked vexed.

"Oh, yes, if you like. If you make it out, you will tell me. It's all nonsense and I was very silly to let myself get excited over it I know I shall not sleep to-night.

“But”—she began again, and checking herself a moment, continued, “it can’t be any-
“thing.”

As I sauntered home leisurely, smoking and enjoying the delightful summer night, I meditated a good deal.

When alone in my rooms, I examined the paper again. The mark on it was not like any writing that I knew, and yet it suggested writing of some sort. It was of course continuous. As I turned it this way and that between my fingers, I recollected that diplomatic secrets had more than once been betrayed by blotting paper. I rose from my seat, and, moving to the mirror over the mantel-shelf, I held the paper up to it. The mark then looked a good deal more like writing, but on turning it upside down, I read without much difficulty,

“*How rash in you thus to disclose our love,*”
and then followed a man’s name.

A silence followed while Hopeton filled and lit a fresh pipe.

Presently the Very Distinguished Personage said :

“I presume that that is a true story, Mr. Hopeton.”

“Yes, Sir, quite true.”

“I shall be glad if you will oblige me with
“a few minutes’ conversation in my rooms
before you go to bed.”

“I am at your Highness’s orders,” an-
“swered Hopeton.

And we were left wondering.



A ROYAL AMERICAN.

THE bugles sang Tattoo on the parade ground of the Quebec Gate Barracks one brilliant moonlit night in winter in the early fifties. The music floated out over the ice-bound river until meeting an answering call from the post on St. Helen's Island they clashed together and set the snow crystals shivering.

The glass marked a degree or two under zero, and the fur capped, grey coated, long booted sentries, who wore extra watch-coats and were relieved every hour in such weather, crunched briskly up and down their beats.

Lights twinkled from the fort and from the farther bank of the river, and a habitant, driving home along the river road, blazed with young fir trees, was singing.

“ Isabeau s’y promène
Le long de son jardin
Le long de son jardin
 Sur le bord de l’île
Le long de son jardin
 Sur le bord de l’eau
 Sur le bord du vaisseau.”

Inside the barrack gate and in front of the officers’ quarters were standing half a dozen of the snug little carriages which are especially good for travel on country roads in winter.

The horses rattled their bits and pawed the snow impatiently, while the waiting grooms thrashed their arms and stamped their feet.

Presently the storm door of the Mess House opened with a little shriek as the cord of the weight ran over the pulley. Some officers came out, muffled to the eyes in buffalo coats, and stepping into their sleighs drove out in single file past the envious sentry on the gate.

The little procession soon broke up, as one sleigh after another turned out of the line, but only to meet again at the appointed rendezvous where a score of vehicles assembled; but there each sleigh contained beside the driver a muffled female figure. Pleasant voices and gay little laughs mingled with the musical

jingle of the sleigh bells as the whole party turned their horses' heads towards the North Star and took the road to the Sault-au-Recollet, where they were to dance and sup at the old French Manor House of Monsieur LeBer. That gentleman, one of the last of the French Seigneurs in Canada, had borne arms under the English Queen in India and had returned to his native land to marry among his own people, and to dissipate in unstinted but graceful hospitality the remaining acres of a domain that had at one time been larger than most English counties.

The Manor House was partly of stone, and indeed had been built with and upon the ruins of the ancient bastion-flanked manor house of the first seigneur of La Chesnay, whose domain was erected to a barony by letters patent of His Most Christian Majesty King Louis IV, signed by that august monarch's own hand. The parchment may at this day be seen in the Parliament Library at Ottawa.

The house consisted of a corps-de-logis and two wooden wings, the easternmost of which joined on to a long range of offices and stables.

As the leading sleigh shot through the

avenue of tall firs and pulled up in front of the house, the hall door was thrown open by a footman in a livery of green velvet and gold lace, while from the servants' hall a small army of helpers issued and drove the sleighs to the stables as fast as they discharged their fares.

As they entered they were met by their host and hostess supported by a merry group of house guests, and the long hall was filled with the bustle of welcoming in French and English. Joyful cries greeted each identification as mufflers were unwound and capuchons thrown back, revealing bright eyes and rosy faces. Then the ladies slipped upstairs and the men warmed their numbed fingers at the great iron box-stove which stood in the middle of the hall while the green liveried servant brought them home-made *liqueur d'étrangles*.

Presently the men too retired to reappear in indoor dress, and were soon joined by the ladies who flocked in together.

Then someone at the piano struck up a waltz, and the hall and salon were filled by whirling couples. After the waltz the village fiddler elbowed a quadrille, and piano and

fiddle by turns kept the light feet busy until supper time, while delighted servants peeped at the scene.

Young Basing, a Lieutenant of that famous corps The Prince Consort's Own Royal Americans, had driven out a very nice girl in his carriage, but she was not what is now-a-days called his "best girl." Alas! she had been bespoken by a lucky Captain of Artillery, and Basing occupied by his duties to his own charge had found little chance to speak to Mary Marychurch—for that was her pretty name. He did, however, manage to engage her for a dance after supper. It was a very merry feast, and was taken as a necessary reinforcement before the drive back to town.

Basing and Mary Marychurch sat next to each other at the table, though, of course, he had to take in the girl he had driven.

The motto-writing poets are not often remarkable for the quality of their verse, but now and then they cause things to happen.

Mary pulled a cracker with Basing, and as she unwound the slip of paper from a stony-hearted almond she coloured slightly and carelessly slipped the motto under the edge of her plate.

“Mayn’t I see it?” said Basing.

“Of course, if you like — But it’s very silly.”

The verse was

“When love makes signals from afar,
“I show no answering sign;
“But when he wages closer way
“I yield my heart to thine.”

Basing read it and his face became grave for a moment. He had noticed the girl’s changing colour, and he was making up his mind to settle that night a tormenting question that had been in his daily and nightly thoughts for some weeks past. He would have attempted it at once had they been alone. Just then Madame Le Ber gave the signal and the ladies moved to leave the table — and, in moving, one of Mary Marychurch’s gloves slipped from her lap. Basing saw it, and picking it up he followed with his partner. Presently the piano announced a polka, and Basing going in search of Mary found her in the long hall near the great end-window, which, opening upon a wrought iron balcony, gave a view of the garden, now deep

under the snow, in which the tall black evergreens stood like sentinels.

Beyond them a broad band of level white marked the course of the Rivière des Prairies, whose farther shore was outlined by trees over which could be seen the crests of the Laurentian Mountains gleaming some thirty miles away.

As Basing moved towards the girl he glanced at the window, and saw that the sky was flushing with feathery sprays of rosy light which shot up from the Northern horizon to die away in the zenith, and be followed by others like rocket-wakes at a gigantic display of fire-works.

“Oh, look at the Northern Light, Miss Marychurch!” cried Basing, stepping close to the window, whose wide curtains were partly drawn, forming a recess which made an admirable flirtation corner.

I think that Basing tried to say something, but there was a light in Mary Marychurch’s eyes that sprang not from the North, and in an instant he was holding her in his arms and kissing her. She trembled a little as he held her, but her face was happy beyond expres-

sion, and the rosy Northern Light covered her blushes.

“Oh, come, see the Aurora!” cried someone from the hall, and, as scampering feet neared their nook, the lovers started apart and stared intently into the night.

“What a beastly shame!” a man said to his partner. He had himself been behind the curtain that evening and was a sportsman.

It was some minutes before the rosy light died away, paling at the last to apple green and silver.

The two young people had time to compose their faces and no one was searching their tell-tale eyes. Then the chaperone said that it was late and that they must start for town.

Mary slipped away among the girls and Basing did not see her again that night save as a bundle of furs being carefully tucked into a sleigh by the gunner. He had her glove, however, and had thrust it as near his heart as it could go, and there it diffused a warmth that tingled through his body and made him feel that he spurned the earth beneath him. He took a big drink before

starting, and though he talked almost too gaily to his companion on the way home, yet he drove steadily and carefully. Once or twice he said to himself delightedly, under his breath, "Oh, my God!" He meant it well, and, indeed, as the beginning of a thanksgiving it sounded well enough.

Next morning Basing had to take his turn for duty as officer of the day. He had had no time to arrange for an exchange of duty and so passed a humdrum day in barracks, though inwardly he was glowing with the fires of love and hope. By ill luck his Colonel had chosen that day for an extraordinary inspection of the regimental equipment, for a great war was brewing in the East, and Basing was obliged to drag unwilling feet in attendance.

Now the situation was this—Basing had held Mary Marychurch in his arms and had kissed her and she had returned his kiss. This was a profession of love on both sides, but Basing had not had time to say a word about marriage, and warriors are apt to kiss and ride away as the girl very well knew.

She went for her usual afternoon drive up

and down St. James and Notre Dame streets, where many smart officers in fur-trimmed uniforms saluted, but there was no sign of Basing. The girl was disappointed and vexed, and under the impulse of half conscious spite ordered the many-caped coachman to drive out along St. Mary street to one of the old-fashioned riverside mansions where she paid a call, and then, although five o'clock tea had not been invented, she stayed so long that she knew that when she got home the hour for callers would be past, and that Basing would be punished. Little children and young ladies in love are often very cruel.

But when Mary Marychurch found no card awaiting her return she felt humiliated, and then a great fear came upon her and made her heart stand still. When the locked door of her own room was behind her, a storm of tears burst, and shaken by anger, love and shame she stifled her sobs in her pillow.

She sent down word that she was too ill to come to dinner, as was indeed the truth. Of course Basing could not call in the evening, but he found time before mess to write a note.

Dear Miss Marychurch,—

I have been on duty in barracks all day and have been unable to call upon you and tell you all that I hope you have guessed, and which I would have told had I not been interrupted last evening. May I come and say it to-morrow afternoon?

Your ever faithful servant,

JOHN HALE BASING.

At mess that night the talk was chiefly of the coming war, and although the regiment was low down on the roster for active service, yet the officers hoped that when the spring should unlock the ice gates of the St. Lawrence their distinguished corps might get the route.

An army was being got together in England, and that brave and experienced officer, General Hawley, Basing's uncle, had been appointed to a brigade, and Basing was daily expecting his promised selection for a post on his staff. He was a much-envied man that night, and indeed with the delights of love and fighting both so near him he was feeling very happy in a tumultuous way.

When "Mr. Vice" gave "The Queen," that

time-honoured toast was drunk with more than ordinary devotion, and as Basing in rising from the table buckled on his sword, his hand stole to the hilt for a moment. It would soon be a real weapon. He ran across the barrack square to his quarters, and putting on plain-clothes fur cap and coat passed the gate and jumped into a carter's sleigh. He gave the driver the direction, but when near Mary Marychurch's home he got out and walked to the villa, which stood alone in its own grounds. He had not cared to entrust his letter to his servant, and not wishing to be recognized by anyone who might answer the door, he pushed the envelope through the letter slip, and ringing the bell departed.

He regained the barracks on foot, and as he turned in that night a musical "All's well" from a distant sentry was echoed across the ice. He slept well.

The next day the Prince Consort's Own Royal Americans had a snowshoe parade and sham fight on the river. The Colonel thought that snowshoes might be useful in Russia, and the men were delighted. The enemy, represented by a half company of the regiment,

were posted in a snow-clad redoubt on St. Helen's Island, and aided by a carronade which had been skidded into the old battery by joyful artillerymen, they bade defiance to the attack.

The riflemen marched out of barracks with the broad, flat snowshoes slung at their backs, and presently were halted and extended; even numbers gave their firelocks to their lefthand men and tied their snowshoes on to their mocassined feet; then the lefthand men did the like, and marching at ease the regiment emerged upon the icy plain, treading delicately, but with many a fall, for it takes long practice to tie on shoes securely and march in them in ranks. There was much laughter which was not checked by the officers.

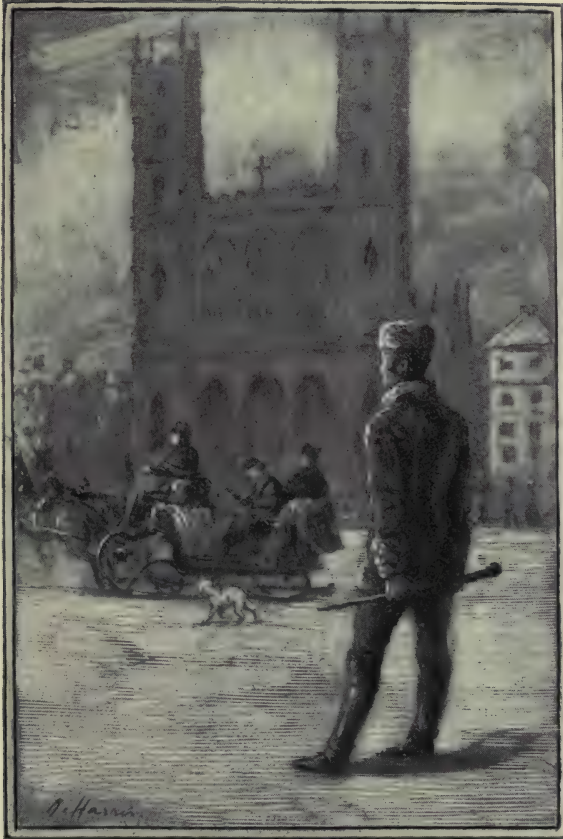
Presently the bugler sounded the "commence firing," and the leading company which had been advanced as skirmishers began a fusilade when Coffin's Field Battery, their brass six pounders on sleds, galloped joyously to their aid, and unlimbering in a whirl of snow fiercely cannonaded the enemy. It was a pretty sight, and as the advancing infantry tripped and fell in numbers it was highly sug-

gestive of a real battlefield. The men with lips stained blue from biting cartridges struggled gamely on until the "halt" and "cease firing" were sounded as they got within storming distance. It was a very good frolic, and everybody enjoyed himself. Even Basing forgot for a while the note he expected to find at his quarters on his return.

The regiment marched back to barracks preceded by the battery, who took the river road, and when *terra firma* was regained snowshoes were taken off and the ranks closed.

When the parade was dismissed Basing hastened to his quarters, but found no letter. His first feeling of disappointment changed to wrath, and he reproached the girl, then he reproached himself still more for doubting her.

He argued the case high and low and round about as a man in love will, and growing wiser he did a sensible thing—he made up his mind to trust to the girl's honesty and to wait. But waiting alone in his quarters was too hard, and he did not in his mood care for the companionship he might find in the ante-room. So he went for a walk in the town, secretly hoping that he might meet Miss Marychurch. His



hope was realized, but as the well-known sleigh passed him at a slow trot the girl, whose eyes met his coldly for a moment, bowed very slightly and turned her head away. Basing's dog, a gay-hearted white poodle, who knew the girl well, bounded after the sleigh, and longing to be caressed leaped into her lap with much show of dog love; but to his utter astonishment he was quietly but firmly pushed out and bidden to go back. He returned in wonder to his master and walked sorrowfully at heel. There was no mistake now, she loved neither his dog nor him.

Basing tramped on steadily enough for a few minutes, and then returned to barracks by another street. When he had entered his quarters and closed the door, he said to his wistful-eyed companion, "Damned hard on both of us, Jack, isn't it?" and gently patted the dog's head.

He sat a while by the fire in the twilight and thought it all over. Yes, it was over.

Presently he struck a match to light a pipe and saw a letter lying on his table. The long blue envelope gave no tender hope, but promised a summons to death or glory.

And such it was, for it was an order to report

himself to General Hawley at Portsmouth without delay.

The next morning he was driven across the river in a sleigh on his way to New York, where he took ship and sailed away into the war cloud gathering in the East.

About seven years afterwards the greatest civil war in history raged in the United States, and the English Government suddenly saw fit to hurry a small army, composed of picked regiments, across the winter wilds from Halifax to the Canadian frontier. That distinguished Corps, the Prince Consort's Own Royal Americans, was one of the chosen. The regiment had lost many men and officers in the Crimea and the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, but there remained a number of all ranks who had been with the battalion in Montreal, and who looked forward with happy anticipation to renewal of old friendships in what has always been a favourite station for British soldiers.

Basing, now major, was with his regiment. Of course he had not forgotten Mary Marychurch, but since he had seen her last he had had several flirtations, one of which, at least, for a while, threatened to be serious.

If at times he thought of the Canadian girl with a pang of angry humiliation, the pain each time was less, and at last when occupied by his latest serious love affair he felt contented, if not thankful for his ill treatment by his first love.

If, on his return to Canada, he had found Miss Marychurch a married woman grown stout and motherly, or worn and faded by family cares, it is very likely that he would have felt entirely grateful for his escape.

But Mary Marychurch had remained single, and the seven years had but added womanly dignity to her charms.

She and Basing met at a dinner party soon after the Royal Americans' arrival at their winter quarters in Montreal.

Many people remembered that he had been attentive to her, but no one knew the whole truth, so it was very natural that their hostess should have set them together at table.

As Major Basing made his way across the drawing-room to take Miss Marychurch down to dinner he felt rather more excited than he had expected. She met his rather formal greeting very gracefully, and made him a little

compliment upon his promotion. There was a look in her eyes that was mischievous and yet not unkind. She was so lovely that as the dinner neared its end he had almost forgotten the girl's cruelty, and uplifted by the neighbourhood of her charms and by good cheer he fell to talking almost in the old way. But the girl held him at arm's length, and to his annoyance persisted in regarding their past love-making as a mere boy-and-girl flirtation, and a ridiculous one at that. She even affected a sisterly interest in his life during the last seven years, and her manner suggested that she was not unaware of Basing's love affairs. This was indeed the case, for a girl friend had married into the regiment, and space had been found in her letters to Canada for much regimental gossip.

As he walked to his quarters that night Basing was shaken by the love fever which, as most men know, has turns of chill and heat. The attack was none the less violent because unexpected, and he began to find in his late attachment only a flower of the love which Mary Marychurch had first planted in his heart. For so long as the roots and trunk of a love live they will throw back to their first blossoms

on occasion, no matter what grafts may have flourished on the branches.

When Basing closed the door of his sitting-room behind him he lit the gas and took a framed photograph of a woman from the chimney piece, and gently removing the picture thrust the frame into the fire—a packet of letters followed. He was an honest man and preferred to burn his ships behind him. If he suffered defeat, no other woman's bark should bear him away from Actium to recover of his wound.

Mary Marychurch brushing her hair that night made a face at herself in the glass.

Some days afterwards Basing managed to corner Miss Marychurch and told her that he loved her and offered to tell her more, but the girl lightly put his words aside, and, as he became more pressing, showed such anger that he was seized with the fear that his repentance had come too late, and that Mary Marychurch was estranged forever.

Grown man of the world as he was, he could not conceal his grief from the girl. But she meant to be quite sure of Basing's constancy, and although she nightly called herself names,

the shadow of that other woman lay before her and she held out.

One day at last she dropped Basing a half invitation to tea the next afternoon. They were at the rink, and Basing saw her into her sleigh. As she moved off she said quietly to that astonished man :

“ I got your letter last month.”

The next afternoon Mary Marychurch said “ Not at home to any one but Major Basing,” and then she spent a feverish hour.

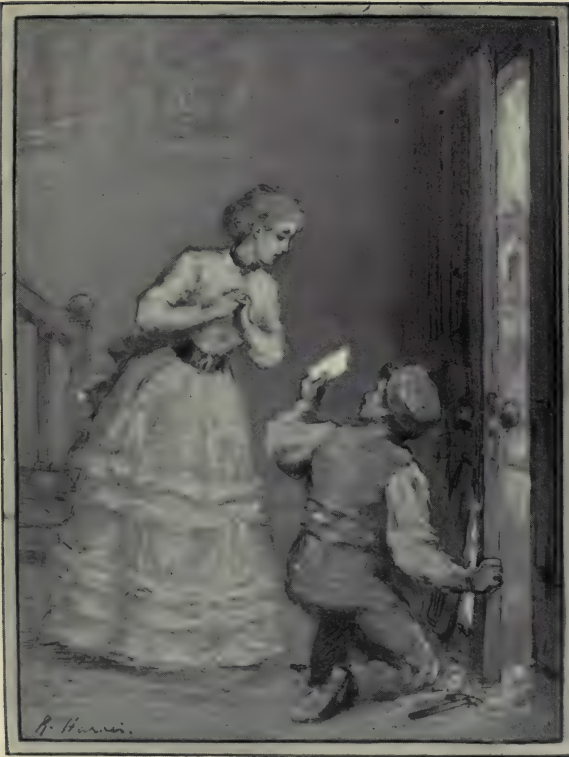
But when that gentleman was announced she appeared to be perfectly calm and received him with easy grace.

A few commonplace remarks were exchanged as she poured the tea, and then without preamble she said :

“ Last month our hall door was taken to pieces to be repaired, and they found that the panels were double where the letter slip is. Some dozen letters, among them yours, had fallen between the panels. “ Here it is,” she said, holding up a stained envelope.

* * * * *

They never told anybody about the lost letter, and indeed they did not speak of it to each



other, for they felt humiliated and awed by the chance which had estranged them only to bring them together like dry leaves whirling downwind. But I think that their married life was all the happier for the trial they had suffered.



THE CRUX ANSATA.

I am, in a modest way, a collector of objects of art, and one day I paused before a lapidary's shop to gaze into the window.

As I ran my eyes over the contents of dusty trays full of cheap rough and cut stones, hoping that I might chance upon some unappreciated gem, I saw among the commoner objects an oval dark green stone which apparently bore an inscription.

Entering the shop I asked leave to inspect the contents of the window, and, after a pretense of examining several worthless pebbles, I picked up the object which had attracted my notice, and, rubbing the dust from it, carried it to the light. It was a piece of jade of a form familiar to students of oriental symbolism, and was engraved with a Crux Ansata or Key of the Nile, surrounded by a legend in some character, resembling the

Persian. I at once decided that the gem must have a history ; for the Egyptian emblem and Assyrian letters suggested that the stone had undergone varied adventures.

I enquired the price, which proved to be very modest, and quickly paying it, I slipped the stone into my pocket and left the shop.

It was a fine day, and as I stepped along, slightly elated by my trouvaille, I was conscious of a lordly feeling that the world was pleasant and had been made for me. I caught passing glances from the women as I went, and their eyes seemed to express sympathy with my good spirits in a rather marked way. But it was not until I was seated in an omnibus, chiefly freighted with the fair sex, that I realized the full significance of those looks.

I am old enough to have lost shyness and not so well favoured as to be vain, so that when I looked about me and encountered other eyes on every side, I at first thought that a large smut on my nose or some grotesque omission in my toilet was the cause of attraction. A hasty glance into my watch case reassured me. I was clean and dressed with that quiet neatness on which I pride myself.

Presently a shifting of seats caused my left hand neighbour, a good looking lady-like woman of about thirty, to move closer to me until she fairly rested against me, in which position she seemed inclined to remain. She did not look at me, but her face must have expressed content, for all the other women in the omnibus shot angry glances at her. A lady seated opposite drew a letter from her muff, and under pretence of re-reading it, laid its envelope in her lap in such a position that I could read the address, which was that of a well known promoter and patroness of charitable societies. A pretty girl of about eighteen at the other end of the 'bus was gazing at me with a wondering fascinated expression; as I lifted my eyes to hers her lids swiftly dropped, but not before I had read something of that story which most men have once in their lives seen in an honest woman's eyes.

Far from being flattered by these marks of interest, I felt embarrassed and alarmed. Were the women mad or was I? Magnetic currents were being aimed at me from all sides, and as, unable to endure them longer, I



started to my feet, a general sigh filled the vehicle. I did not wait for more, but springing from the omnibus while it was yet in motion I hastily turned the next corner and fled to my chambers.

Safe inside my own door I lit a pipe and investigated.

My pulse and temperature were normal and my head clear. I came to the conclusion that I had been the victim of my imagination, unduly stimulated by the reflections on the cult of Isis which had been provoked by the piece of jade in my pocket. I took it out and after washing it carefully I examined it through a magnifying glass. I discovered nothing new, but I saw that the engraving was exquisitely fine and polished, which was evidence of age—the perfect polishing of intaglios being to-day a lost art.

The stone was therefore really a gem, and could not be a forgery decked out to catch the tourist in the land of the Pharaohs. The next thing to do was to find out the meaning of the legend, so I set out to see my friend, Professor X——, the famous oriental scholar. I found him at home, and he promptly pro-

nounced the letters to be Sanskrit and their meaning to be, "I bring love."

Then I understood it all. The Professor turned it over and over in silence, and I hastily decided to keep my own counsel as to my experience of the morning.

"What do you think of it?" I asked, carelessly.

"If genuine, it must be very old, perhaps older than the Tables of the Law. It is an Egyptian love charm which found its way into India, where some one, acquainted with its character, caused the legend to be engraved upon it. Perhaps as a warning."

The Professor looked grave for a moment and then added, smiling a little:

"I should be rather careful of it if I were you. May I ask how you came by it?"

"I picked it up," said I, "and I will tell you all about it some day."

I thought it probable that I should have a good deal to tell.

Then thanking the Professor, and excusing myself on the score of an appointment to keep, I jumped into a passing cab—no more omnibuses for me at present—and returned to

my chambers, where placing the gem on the table by my side, I prepared to think the matter out.

But before doing so I decided to put the charm to the test once more, so I rang for my housekeeper, Mrs. Hollis, a staid woman of forty. When she answered the summons she entered the room with her usual decorum, but her face suddenly altered its expression and I knew that her faithful service was changed to another feeling, which sublime in its essence was really ridiculous in the case of Mrs. Hollis. I gave her some orders about dinner and dismissed her. She left the room with unwilling feet.

No doubt remained to me. I was the owner of a love charm in full working order. I sat for some time lost in conjecture of the various scenes it had witnessed and tragedies it had caused in its centuries of world wandering, when I bethought me that the action was transferred to my own time and that I was the actor.

I am, I believe, a delicate minded Epicurean, and, of course, an Agnostic. So that, while I had no inclination to make vulgar use

of my new found power, I felt quite disposed to experiment and investigate in the field of human nature whose gate-key I held under my hand.

That the women who were made subject to the charm would be victims was true, but, on the other hand, I myself ran no inconsiderable risks.

The story of the Trojan war might become paltry reading when set beside my own history if I wielded my power rashly.

I suddenly remembered One, who, exalted upon a pinnacle of the Temple, had been offered like dominion and had spurned it. His example came to the aid of my better nature, and I resolved that my new found power should only be exercised for the benefit of my fellow men by philosophical investigation and faithful description of the working of a love charm.

I had long been of opinion that the Wisdom of the Ancients contained physical truths which our modern scepticism ignorantly denies. The belief in the influence of the stars and precious stones is world over and world old.

I dined alone that evening, and afterwards betook myself to a small and very select dance where I was sure to meet the fine flower of society.

As I made my bow to the hostess her face brightened and she said,

“It was so good of you to come. I have not seen you for an age.”

I promptly asked for a dance.

“I can’t give you one now,” she replied, “but come to me at supper time and I will manage it.” She spoke as if she had something to tell me in private, and as I gratefully accepted and bowed myself away she added, “Try to stay late, I want you to have second supper with us.”

My appearance in the ball room excited no interest among the men—a friendly nod here and there was all I caught—but with the women it was another matter. Their glances met me on every hand, some bold and others timid, but all telling the same story, confirmed by rising blushes and heaving bosoms.

I am fond of dancing and obtained some waltzes. As I span around the room I had assurance that my several partners were under the spell of the charm I carried with me.

I was so fortunate as to secure a dance with the great beauty and heiress of the season, and as we rested afterwards in a shady nook of the conservatory I received every encouragement to accept the prize for which many men of the highest rank and greatest wealth were struggling.

I confess that I was not uninfluenced by the atmosphere of love and excitement by which I was surrounded, and a bewildering succession of rapturous possibilities flashed through my mind.

Perhaps there was safety in numbers. It would indeed have been hard to choose among the beautiful women who were sighing for me.

In the midst of this hurly-burly of passion, the process of unconscious cerebration suddenly lit up a corner of my memory, and I read as in burning letters my promise to myself to work no evil with my mysterious power.

I felt that my only safety lay in instant flight. As I was making my way to the door of the crowded ball-room I met Edith.

I did not know that she was in town, and had, indeed, been trying to avoid seeing her or

hearing of her. We had been great friends and I loved her. But before I had dared to tell her so, a small quarrel had come between us and had been magnified into a serious estrangement by our deep interest in each other.

No man can judge his own case with the woman he loves, and although I had reason to believe that Edith liked me, she concealed any deeper feeling, if she possessed it, behind those screens which women deck so artfully and use with such skill. My love for her was, I think, the real motive for the good resolutions I had made with regard to the use of the love charm.

Two young men were talking to her and begging for dances as I caught sight of her. I tried to step past unnoticed, and I was conscious of being thankful that as she had evidently "come on" late from some other party she could not have been witness of my triumphs that evening.

But Edith saw me, and smiling, beckoned me to her. My heart stood still, and my brain felt as if it were slowly turning and twisting my head round with it. Proud Edith had forgotten her pride and was gazing

at me with the love light in her beautiful eyes.

Horror struck I pressed by her with an incoherent apology, and rapidly escaped to the outer air.

I swore at the poor touts who clamoured about me with offers of cabs, and soon was walking rapidly through the cool and quiet streets, which were beginning to change colour under the morning light dawning in the east.

As I hurried along I owned to myself that I was justly punished for what I now knew to be a dishonest act. I saw that I had no right to bring disturbance into other men's homes, and if I had set a spark to my own thatch it was but a fit chastisement.

Then came before me the image of Edith as I had last seen her. I had but to keep her under the spell and she would be mine, and we should both be happy. But no. I could not be happy with the knowledge that my honour was gone, and that the loss of that bit of stone lying in my waistcoat pocket might lose me Edith's stolen love. What would then be left but dishonour to the woman I loved and the hell of a married life begun under false pretences.

Fate guided my feet as I paced the streets, and I presently found myself standing by the railings at St. Margaret's, Westminster. A few lights twinkled about Palace Yard, but the day had not yet begun to breathe, and as my eyes were lifted to the huge mass of the Abbey, slightly tinted by the rose of dawn, I felt the insignificance of my own desires and life, and the great Christian Sanctuary at hand reminded me that a new light had dawned upon the world since the day when the sacred sign of Isis had been carved upon that jade stone. I, at least, was a child of the century, and knew from experience that the wisdom of the ancients was too great a thing for my unproved hands to wield.

I think that I uttered a short prayer of thanksgiving as I turned about and made for the bridge.

A policeman eyed me carefully, and, following me at a little distance, said something to another policeman and then returned to his beat.

When I got well out upon the bridge I seized the love-charm and sent the Key of the Nile spinning out into the air, whence it fell

with a tiny splash into the muddy deeps of Father Thames. Whether to rest there until the old Gods come again, or whether to be borne seaward to deck some new Aphrodite, I know not.

As I retraced my way with the decided step and uplifted head of a man whose mind is made up, I passed the astonished policeman. I asked him for a light, and it was probably the calm cheerfulness of my voice that prevented him from detaining me as a suspicious character.

It was daylight when I let myself into my chambers, but I went to see Edith that same morning.

The love-light still shone in her eyes as she read my errand in my face.

I told her several things then and afterwards ; but I have never told her of the jade stone engraved with the Crux Ansata and the sanskrit motto, " I bring love."



A COSSAY SAINT.

"Joie de rue, Douleur de maison."

"Cossay saint—Hoose deil."

"**Y**OU must be very good to me, Dear."
"God helping me I will."

The question of their lives had been asked and answered, and, taking breath after their first bewilderment, the young man and girl were trying to open their souls to each other. They had neither of them pledged troth before, and, uplifted by the sweet mystery of love, were at that moment as pure of heart as our first parents before the fall.

He, proud of his love, but awestricken—she, already worshipping her hero.

He began a sort of confession, for he had flirted with other girls; but she, wise by woman's wit, stopped his mouth with her hand, crying,

"No, don't tell me. I know everything. But I shall always be your last love, shall I not?"

“Yes, Dear, always.”

It was easy to answer thus, and he quite believed himself. The young people were well-born and well-bred, and good education, followed by a fair experience of travel in other countries than their own, had opened their minds to large views of the world. It was indeed in front of the most famous picture in Europe that they had first met, and, during their happy courtship, they delighted in the fact that the kind eyes of the greatest Madonna had blessed that chance encounter.

They were very happy and full of sympathy for all other lovers, but pitied them for not having such a joy as their own,—firmly believing that no other man and woman had ever owned love quite like theirs.

The girl did indeed on one occasion get up a lover's quarrel,—moved by curiosity, as she afterwards penitently confessed, but the proud distress of the young man terrified her into sudden and utter submission, while he called himself a clumsy brute, not half good enough for her.

The happy weeks slipped by with increasing swiftness until the crowning day with

inexorable punctuality bade them to the altar. There he, Maurice, took her, Margaret, to wife with mutual promises of love and faithfulness while life should last. Then the marriage music sang and thundered for them as it had done for countless couples before, and they passed down the cathedral aisle under the triumphant smiles of the ladies and the sympathetic glances of the men.

And so they went out into the sunshine of the gay spring world, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Rashdall. Their wedding journey was commonplace to all save themselves, but it was when they settled down in their own home that they really found the happiness of wedded life. The fitting together of the life puzzle was infinitely interesting. Each had much to give up that had seemed a part of self, and if at times ancient prejudices or pet whims blocked the game, love and goodwill at last adjusted a very satisfying map of life. Even the most oddly-shaped little kingdoms were found a safe corner, and the *modus vivendi* was triumphantly established.

It was, at best, however, but a *modus vivendi*, for there were possibilities of the intervention

of a new power which might demand a readjustment of boundaries. The new power did intervene, and when Mrs. Rashdall timidly but with infinite content announced the news to her husband, he felt the *στοργή*—the great yearning. He was not a little surprised at the new emotion, but his wife was from that hour a shrine to which he paid fondest worship, and he often thought of the Madonna and Child.

CHAPTER II.

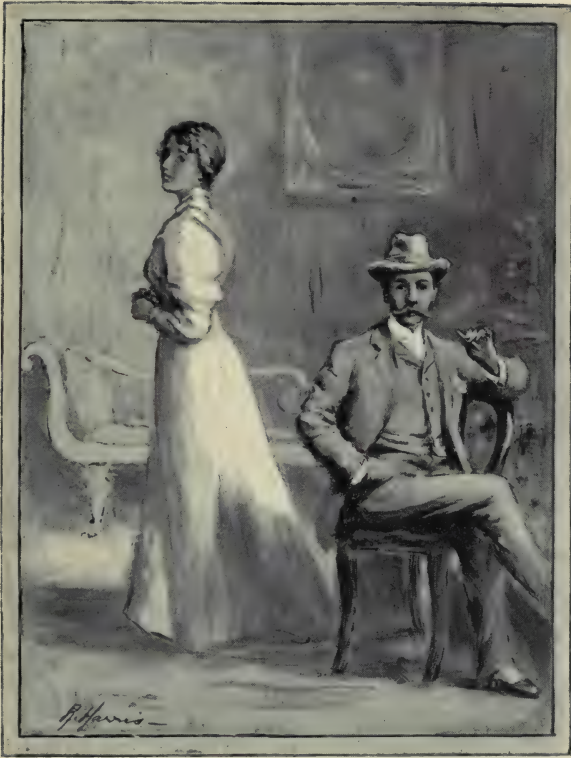
FIVE years of married life slipped by uneventfully, save for the birth of two children, who, occupying their place in the well-ordered household without undue disturbance, "completed the establishment," as the army gazettes say. Their parents accepted them with joy, watched them with interest, and regarded them with affection, but agreed that they desired no more. Worldly wisdom clipped the wings of Love, and Custom blunted his shafts, while Carelessness let slip the bandage from his eyes.

Slowly the glamour of the early days of their married life faded away. Rashdall, unconscious of the change which came so gradually, made no effort to stay it. Accepting his lot in life and satisfied with it, he had no idea that the flame on the domestic altar needed tending. First the little endearments were neglected as being no longer necessary, then the courtesies were omitted as superfluous.

He got into the habit of sleeping after dinner, and even became slack in his table manners when alone with his wife. He did not suppose that it mattered to her, but every time that he pushed his plate away to make room for his elbows she winced, and she dared not ask him for anything on the table lest he should slide it across to her. He did it once or twice, and it almost made her cry. He was very fond of his children, but he did not share his love for them, and their mother at times felt jealous. Forgetfulness of the little courtesies, inconsiderate criticisms of the housekeeping and table, and a habit of playful rough speech when answering her were like pebbles in a shoe, and galled his wife until her whole person became feverish.

He did not know the harm he was doing, and, when one day he sat down in the drawing-room with his hat on, he stared after her as she silently but hurriedly left the room.

She was too proud to complain, but she deeply felt and resented the neglect of the customary honours due to her as a gentlewoman, wife and mother. The worst of it was that when strangers were present his man-



ners became at once irreproachable without any seeming effort. In society he appeared to be the proud and affectionate husband, and most people found him charming—especially the women. But the happy manner was invariably left behind as the brougham door shut upon Rashdall and his wife on their way home.

He liked the society of women, but he paid no serious attention to any one, and his wife had no uneasiness on that score. The saying that “marriage is the great event of a woman’s life, but only an incident in that of a man” had proved true in their case.

Rashdall was at heart fond of his wife and proud of her when there was any one by to admire her, but he either forgot, or had never known, that admiration from the man she loves is the breath of life to a woman. The idyll of the honeymoon was a delightful memory when he chanced to think about it—which was not often. But he had no more expected it to last forever than the roses that had decked the altar. His wife was like the new picture, long coveted, then acquired, hung in the best light, suitably framed, and con-

stantly admired for some days, then overlooked, until an unusually bright day or a chance glance recalled it to notice with a pleasure less keen but genuine.

Mrs. Rashdall was not happy. The tender wooing and worship by her husband had been the fullness of life to her, and she had accepted motherhood as a crown. But when lips grew careless and little kindnesses rare, she thought with longing of the days of her honeymoon, and wished to taste once again of the cup of woman's triumph. Even harsh words or rough treatment would have been more easy to bear than a lazy affection that at times looked like indifference. Once or twice she made little advances trying to bring back her lost lover by tenderness and flattery, but tenderness and flattery were alike complacently accepted, and the husband still kept in his shirt sleeves. She knew that motherhood had even heightened her beauty, and presently some one told her so.

It was a man, an old friend of her husband, who had been among their first guests, and who, standing godfather to their firstborn, had almost become part of their little family.

He was quite honest, and enjoyed his position without an ill thought. But, as the husband's care and attention slackened, he was quick to see it, and often soothed the wife's wounded pride by the quiet services and pleasant little flatteries that are the trinkets women love and desire above all. But he never made love to her, or alarmed her by a show of desire—that terror of most delicately nurtured women—and so she came to love him, and one day she said to him suddenly,

“You can't tell how highly I think of you. You are the best man I ever knew, and I don't care for Maurice—There! Do you hate me?”

The man took her hand and drew her to him, but she started back, crying,

“Not that! Not that! You are not like the others.”

Then she cried for a while, the man watching her in dumb dismay. But the barriers he had easily kept between friendship and love had been pushed away, and, knowing that the woman was his when he chose to take her, he began to desire her.

And the Cossay Saint deserved his fate,
though he was really the better man of the
two.



RENUNCIATION.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

WILLIAM CARPENDALE,

Aetat 40

MARIA CARPENDALE, (his wife),

Aetat 35

GEORGE FEARON, (a friend).

SCENE I.

A well appointed library—a wood fire is burning on the hearth—near it is a small table with a tray bearing a spirit stand and mineral waters. At one side is a large table piled with reviews and reports of transactions of women's societies.

Mr. Carpendale is in evening dress, but wears a smoking jacket. Mrs. Carpendale also is in evening dress; her fur cloak lies upon a chair.

Both are seated in easy chairs by the fire. Mr. Carpendale is smoking a pipe and Mrs. Carpendale is sipping a tumbler of sherry and seltzer—an unlighted cigarette is poised between the fingers of her left hand.

MR. CARPENDALE—(*Watches his wife for a while in silence*) “Well, my dear, what is the matter? (*Mrs. Carpendale's throat moves as if swallowing something. The cigarette is raised to her lips, but being unlit*

is withdrawn with a frown. She begins to speak with long drawn breaths, but her voice steadies and becomes plaintive as she goes on.)

MRS. CARPENDALE—"The matter is this, that—I am not your dear." (*She takes a nervous sip from the tumbler and tries to reach the match box on the little table. Mr. Carpendale's eyes gather at the corners, but he rises, strikes a light and gives it to her.*) (*Remorsefully*)—"Thank you, William, you are always kind."

MR. CARPENDALE—"Thank you ; but pray go on. It is rather important, you know." (*Mrs. Carpendale leans her elbows upon her knees and gently blows a jet of smoke into the fire-place.*)

MRS. CARPENDALE—"It is so hard to say some things even when one knows that one is right. How long have we been married?"

MR. CARPENDALE—"About seven years."

MRS. CARPENDALE—"For shame! It is only six years, eight months and thirteen days. Why do you suppose we married?"

MR. CARPENDALE—"Happiness and—other things."

MRS. CARPENDALE—(*Sighing*) “ Yes, that’s true, and we have got on very well, haven’t we? (*Mr. Carpendale gently nods assent.*) But the happiness was only that of children running after a butterfly. We did not catch it, but we were happy while we ran, and when the butterfly flew quite away over the trees, we sat down tired and did not laugh and shout any more. We went home and had bread and jam in the nursery and tried to think that that was better than the butterfly. (*Mr. Carpendale moves uneasily and stares hard at the fire.*) Well, you know that since you educated me above religion, I have read all sorts of things in books of philosophy, and, as I no longer believe marriage to be a sacrament, I don’t see why I should not go out through the garden gate to run after the butterfly with someone else, and perhaps catch it.”

MR. CARPENDALE—“ The ‘*Abbesse de Jour-arres*’ ? ”

MRS. CARPENDALE—“ Yes, if you like, but, of course, not that way. Divorce should be the reward of virtue as well as of vice.”

MR. CARPENDALE—(*Gravely*) “That is true.”

MRS. CARPENDALE—(*Growing more animated and smoking fast.*) “And life is so short, and we don’t believe in a hereafter, do we?”

MR. CARPENDALE—“No, I suppose we don’t believe.” (*A silence during which Mr. Carpendale pours more seltzer into his glass and drinks it.*) (*Abruptly*)—“Is the butterfly already caught?”

MRS. CARPENDALE — (*Blushing indignantly*) “Oh no!—but—but it’s in the net. We—we—didn’t touch it.”

MR. CARPENDALE—“Who holds the net?”

MRS. CARPENDALE—(*After an effort*) “George Fearon.” (*She hides her face for some moments behind a cloud of smoke, then she waves it away and peers anxiously at her husband, who suddenly dashes his tumbler into the fire. Mrs. Carpendale gives a little shriek and promptly flings her own glass after it.*)

MR. CARPENDALE—(*Laughs grimly*) “Ha, ha! You are a very clever woman, Maria.”

MRS. CARPENDALE—Oh, no, but I see things you don’t.”

MR. CARPENDALE—(*Aside*) “Didn’t see it? I’ve been watching it for months.” (*Aloud, gravely and with some tenderness in his voice*) “Thank you for telling me. I had rather that than to have found it out. I must, of course, think it over. There are some difficulties to be overcome and mortifications to be endured—for people will say things of course. But if it doesn’t hurt you it should not hurt me. Now, go to bed and I will see Twiss to-morrow and get information as to how matters can be arranged.” *She rises and stands in front of him, her head slightly bent, her handkerchief is held by two ends in her hands. He kisses her forehead and gently pushing her from the room, says* “Good night, dear.”

MRS. CARPENDALE—“Good night, dear.” (*Mr. Carpendale closes the library door upon her, and, returning to the fireside, mixes a fresh drink—rather strong. He grins amiably.*)

MR. CARPENDALE—“Gad! If she only knew!”

SCENE II.

A hall—Mrs. Carpendale—She takes a bed-room candle from the hall table, lights it, and moves slowly up stairs. She pauses near the top, and rests her hand on the stair rail.

MRS. CARPENDALE—"I wonder who the woman is. I have half a mind to go back."
(She turns and descends a step—then stops)
"No. That is the price I pay."



MY NEIGHBOUR.

I was dead and had been buried. Decorum had been observed at the funeral and the request to "omit flowers" had proclaimed to the world that the deceased and his friends were people of culture.

I remember but little of that last illness. But as my worn-out body became indifferent even to the last throbs of pain, I was conscious of a lazy curiosity and of little else. That curiosity was not immediately gratified, and, indeed, at the present time, I know little save my immediate surroundings, which are dim. I have, however, occasionally, been able to be present at some scenes on Earth; but as I found them uninteresting I know not why I went.

This will explain how it came that I had flashing views of my own funeral, and almost the last flash of the dark shutter showed me

my open grave, and near it a moss-grown tombstone with a woman's name on it.

When I found myself alone I was quite comfortable and regretted nothing ; but as nothing happened, or seemed likely to happen, I fell to speculating as to who my neighbour might be. I had all eternity before me to think it over, and so did not worry, but I felt a growing interest in the woman who lay so close to me that, had we been able to move our hands might have found each other's, and, perhaps, by some gentle pressure given encouragement to endure the tedium of our long waiting.

Once again the dark shutter flashed open and let me out.

I found myself clothed in likeness of the last earthly garments I had worn, and I was standing at the head of my grave, but not alone. It was the night of All Souls, and the great company about me were, like myself, visible above ground, clad in their accustomed habits. As a new comer I felt as shy as on my first day when a new boy at school.

My first thought was for my neighbour, and, turning towards her tomb, I was de-



lighted to see a young and beautiful woman, who seated gracefully on the grave-mound, half reclined against the head stone. Her dress was of the fashion of the last century, and she wore a wide-brimmed hat. She reminded me of Clarissa Harlowe.

I was hesitating how to address her when she spoke to me in a very pleasant voice, but with an intonation that sounded quaint and slightly rustic, but that, of course, was the English of her time.

“I bid you freely welcome, Sir,” she said, “I am very glad to see you. I heard you arrive, but have been all the time guessing what you might be like. You look agreeable and I hope we shall be good neighbours.”

“Madam,” I replied, with my best bow, “I am indeed fortunate in my death since it has procured me the happiness of meeting one so fair.”

“Ah,” sighed she, “go on. It is nearly a hundred years since I have heard a compliment or received a bouquet, and I had many in my time.”

“Pray,” said I, “since you have been pleased to honour me so much, let me offer you a few flowers, which, in spite of a request

to the contrary, some too demonstrative friends insisted upon placing upon my coffin," and hastily diving into my grave, I presently emerged with an armful of floral tokens.

"This," said I, "is a broken column. Its significance you will no doubt perceive; and this," I continued, "is a 'Gates Ajar.'"

"And pray what does that mean?" exclaimed the lady.

"It was suggested, I imagine, by the title of a popular religious novel," I answered, "but you may consider it a prayer to you to open your heart a little way. This pillow is useful as well as ornamental. Allow me to place it behind your shoulders."

"And that?" she exclaimed, holding out her pretty hand for a small bunch of violets.

"That," said I, "meant ——" I hesitated—

"Give it to me," she cried imperiously.

"Tell me who she was."

A far-off cock-crow shrilled in the night.

"I have given her something to think of for a year," said I, as I stretched myself in my coffin.

But kept my hand on the bunch of violets.

THE SCAPEGOAT.

“ And he shall put all their sins upon him,
“ And shall send him away into the wilderness.”

—LEVITICUS XVI.

A scarlet thread hung from her window. She was very honest, and, besides a fair education, possessed most of the qualities which go to the making of a good wife and mother. She did not pretend to be a victim of man's treachery. A shop girl of the better sort, work too hard and pay too scanty had compelled her choice when a well-to-do man asked her to become his mistress.

After a year of companionship they separated, and she became a lodger in a house with a big gilt number on the fan light.

It was afternoon of the day before Christmas, and the girl was lying on her back reading a broken-backed copy of “ Alice in Wonderland,” when she heard her name shrilly called

by the housekeeper. There was some one to see her. She slipped from the bed, yawned, looked in the glass and went down stairs. It was a man who had met her a day or two before, and whose gentle manners had made a pleasant impression upon the girl. Her face lit up as he shook hands heartily.

“I want you to do me a kindness,” said the man, “and first I want to tell you why. You see I am a stranger here and a long way from home, where there is a big family of us, and as I was going along the streets to-day and saw the crowds of hurrying people with parcels under their arms, their faces full of the delight of giving Christmas presents, my heart grew so full and I felt so lonely that the tears fairly came to my eyes. So I thought I would come and see you and ask you if you would mind having your Christmas dinner with me to-morrow. I suppose you can get leave—and we can go to some theatre after if you like—and—perhaps you are lonely, too?”

“God knows I am,” answered the girl, who had flushed and whose red lips trembled while her eyes glittered with waiting tears. “Yes, I will go, and I thank you very much. But it





will not be a party, will it? I hate getting drunk."

"No, only ourselves."

"That's so much better, isn't it?" said the girl. "What time shall I be ready for?"

The man agreed upon an hour and took his leave rather formally, for both felt that their engagement for the morrow had carried them back from the wilderness into the boundaries of the land where are walls and hedges.

The next evening the man called at the set time, and, entering the parlour, scarce knew the ladylike and quietly but well-dressed woman who awaited him. A large bunch of violets was fastened at the waist of her dark gown. It was the girl, who, stepping forward, said :

"Here I am. It was so good of you to send me these lovely violets. I am not worthy to wear them," she continued in a low voice, "but I knew what you meant—and—and I may wear them this one day. Then I shall burn them."

It was a fine cold evening, and, as the clang of the door behind them died away and they were some little distance from the big number, the man gave the girl his arm and they stepped

along smartly over the ringing pavement. The man chatted cheerfully as they went, stopping every now and then to look at the window-show of some brightly lit shop. Their spirits rose as they grew accustomed to their adventure, and when both laughed at a bright remark of the girl they felt quite at ease with each other.

The dinner had been ordered at a quiet, old-fashioned hotel, whose cuisine has a world-wide fame. There the head waiter, bowing respectfully, ushered them to the corner table reserved for them, and the girl, as she drew off her gloves and shot a swift glance round the room, gave a sigh of content. There was no one in the room who knew her.

It was a very good little dinner indeed, and their faces were brightened by the good cheer. The girl's eyes remained soft, though the wine had sent a faint colour to her cheeks. The man thought she looked very beautiful, as indeed she was. The violets breathed out their perfume in the warm air; she toyed with them caressingly from time to time, and her well-shaped white hand looked very delicate against the purple back-ground.

They talked about books and plays, but no

sentimental private feelings were aired, and the man even checked himself as after drinking to a "Merry Christmas" he was about to add "Absent Friends."

After dinner they went to see Mr. Joseph Jefferson in his famous character of Rip Van Winkle. The man had chosen the play, and for two happy hours they lost themselves in that fancy-land of pathos and humour. The girl put her handkerchief to her eyes without affectation at certain parts of the play.

Then the curtain lumbered down and shut out fancy-land, and the girl knew that she too had been dreaming and that another curtain would soon fall between her and the world where she had had a taste of what she knew could never be wholly hers.

As they walked back to the waiting big number the girl said,

"I can't tell you how good you have been to me to-night. I think I will dare to pray for you. It can't hurt, can it?" she continued more lightly.

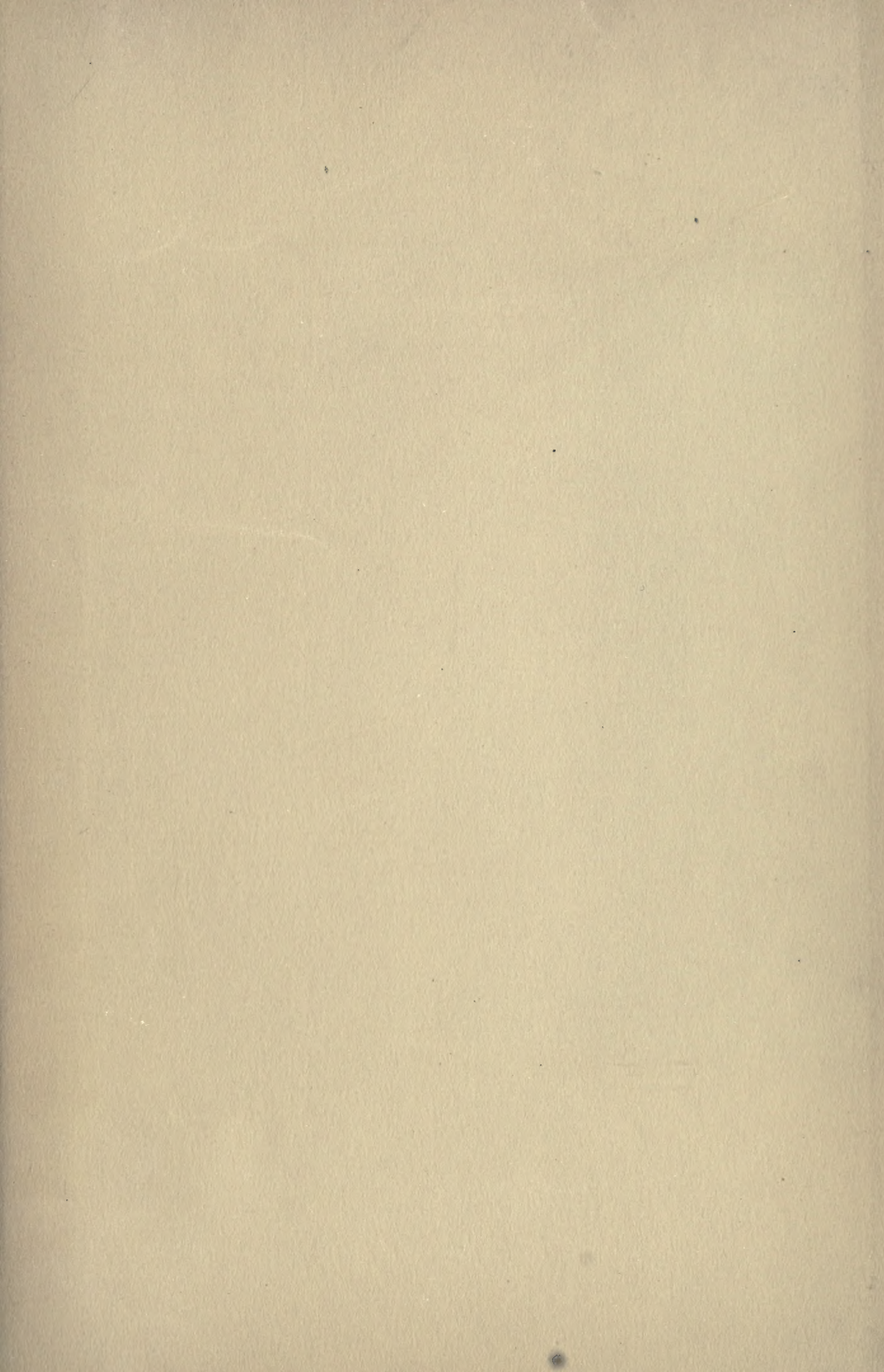
The man was watching her face keenly, and, as they drew near the window whence still hung the scarlet thread, he said,

“Look here, do you mind if I don't go in?”

“God bless you for that,” cried the girl, and, casting her arms about his neck she kissed him twice, and, turning, fled up the steps only to wave a white hand as she entered the door which clanged to on the wrong side for her.

And so she went out again into the wilderness.





509015

Hensley, Sophie Almon.

A semi-detached house, by J. Try-Davies
(pseud.) Illus. Robert Harris.

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